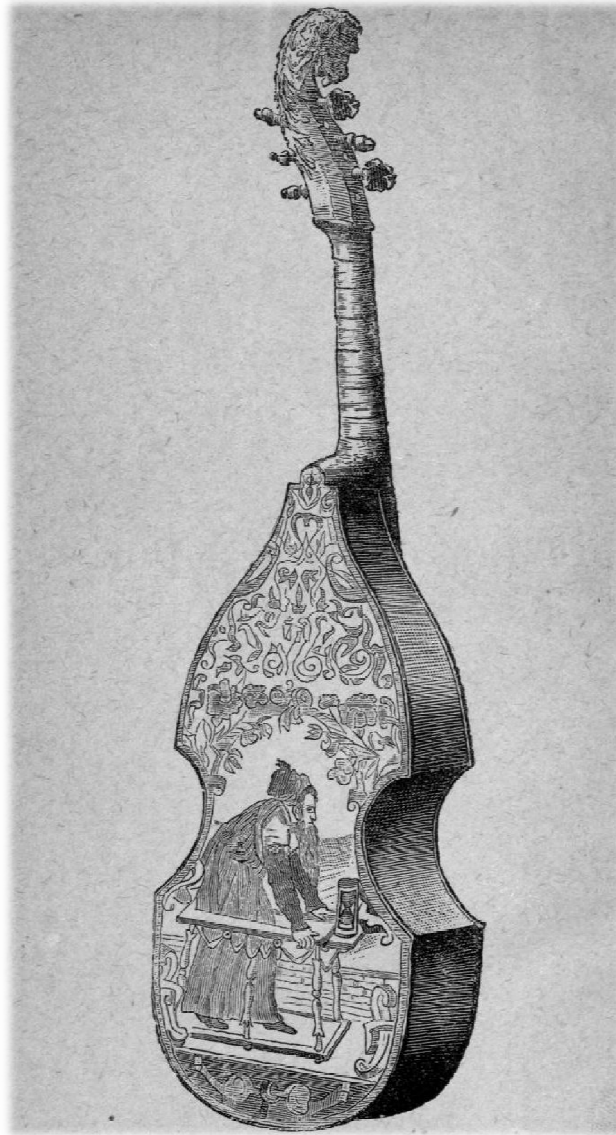


III



a dead spot of light...

Introduction

First, the release of the magazine has been a bit later than I had originally planned. Thanks to some issues with the power supply and the processor fan, I needed to change both of them. Interestingly, an additional fan had to be added in order to remove the unnecessary heat out of the casing. New technology ... new approach ... new concept. It never gets tiring.

Well ... at least the computer runs much more smoothly now.

I am somewhat surprised about the large amount of reviews and even though the time between the previous issue and this one had been considerably short, I actually managed to get more done. Hell knows how. Nevertheless, a two month schedule is too tight and the 19th edition will see the light of day in July and not in June. Therefore, from now on there will only be four and not six editions per year.

Some words on the Chinese poem thing:

This had been an experiment that simply happened by chance. One evening I was browsing the Internet and happened to stumble over this one composition. The original way of approaching it had been quite different and there were plans to add a quote from Plato in Chinese at the end, but this had been disregarded the more the work on this piece progressed. Call it an attempt to use more than one language, but this is definitely something I would like to explore in more depth.

The wonderful thing about Chinese (as well as some other Asian languages) is the use of characters and how these can express a lot of content on a very small space. It opens a variety of new concepts of combining the languages and presenting them in a unique and strange kind of way.

Similar to the previous edition, supplemental files are provided at the entry on the Internet Archive. This time the interview with Chaotic Aeon in the original language; Chinese.

Requests of interviews and reviews are still possible ... I am always open to get in touch with new bands and artists. Also from non-metal genres.

And as I do not want to write this every time in every freaking interview:

I would like to thank every band and label for the promotion material, answers and so on. And thank you for the moral support and nice e-mails ... appreciated!

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Contact:
Oneyoudontknow at yahoo dot de

All the best ...
oneyoudontknow

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Interview & review

Lelahell

Hey, who are members of this latest blast from the Maghreb? Who is answering the questions for the interview?

Lelahell is an Algerian death metal band formed by me (lalahel) in 2011, started first as a one man band. In January 2012 nihil (bass) and slaveblaster (drums) from Barbaros joined the Lelahell's team.

It is nice to have an interview with another band from Algeria. Why don't you write about how the band got started and how the members got in touch with each other?

In the end of 2000's it was difficult to find musician for metal, the old generation disappeared and the new one doesn't existed yet, so I decided to learn to play guitar and practice (I was bass player before), because I didn't find musicians. After that I made some jams with other musicians but they didn't have the metal feeling. So I started Lelahell in 2011 alone with the recording of the Ep, one year after in January 2012 coinciding with the end of the Ep recording slave blaster the drummer of barbaros contacted me because he heard that I was searching for a drummer and a bassist. So I told him to ask nihil for joining us as bass player of Lelahell.

The lineup of Lelahell is complete now.

Why metal? What makes this kind of music so fascinating for you to it? Has there been a starting point, a certain album that sparked your fascination?

My brother was a hard rock fan; he was listening to Scorpions ac/dc and motorhead, I was very young but when I was a teenager I took 3 albums from those bands and listened to them carefully (blackout of scorpions, flick of the switch from ac/dc and No Sleep 'til Hammersmith from motorhead) and I was totally fascinated! The addiction has begun!

Before plunging a bit deeper into Lelahell, why don't you write a bit about the early days of the Algerian metal scene? Nearly twenty years have passed since Neanderthalia had been founded and it would be nice to hear a bit about the days back then. What kind of sound and style did this band have?

Everything began in the early 90's (1992) when I met salim.H who was a singer in a heavy speed metal band called rascass. We had the same passion for death metal, so we rehearsed together to form a band, but it never happen.

Some months after, I was contacted by a friend Mehdi (who was a drummer) to play bass in Neanderthalia.

Neanderthalia was a typical 90's sounding band formed by Samir.M; he was searching for musicians to complete the lineup of the band. After that we were searching for a second guitarist and we found yacine who was a student in the same university that I studied. This was the first complete line up of Neanderthalia.

In 1995 sabri joined the band as drummer (Mehdi was replaced by kamel, and sabri replaced him) and recorded a 3tracks demo. After that we had many problems of communications with Samir the front man of the band so we decided to leave the band and form Litham in July 1996.

Litham would be another project that is not active any more, right? How does the music differ from that of Neanderthalia?

yes Litham isn't active yet, we are planning to record an Ep to remember the old days, but nothing more. The sound of Litham differs a lot from Neanderthalia.

Neanderthalia's music was slow tempo melodic and long simple riffs and screaming vocals a la paradise lost, and Litham was more aggressive more technical and with more local influences and more brutal (in the last songs which aren't recorded yet but played live many times).

Is there a chance to see their releases reappear at some point in the future or do you want to focus on new music? Are you still able to enjoy the music you created back then?

As I said before we are planning to record an Ep with Litham only to remember the old days, I really want to focus on new fresh music. I still enjoy old music for listening only not when playing.

What had been the status of metal been in the 90s and what has changed since? Has everything become more open? Is it easier to distribute and play music (openly)? Has your society become more open towards this extreme kind of art?

The metal scene in Algeria isn't mature yet, there are bands but they exist for 3 or 4 years and ...no more! There were many bands in the past (since the early 90's) but always the same problem. I think that it is due to the lack of concert halls and places to rehearse . But the major problem (which is in most of Arabic countries) is the absence of the underground movement, I mean that people don't activate by themselves maybe because they think that the metal is always like we see it in the TV? I hope that things will change in the future

So what does the name Lelahell refer to? How can it be translated?

Lelahel is a zodiac angel (the sixth among the 72 kabbalah's angels) when we add 'l' it is Lelahell the angel from hell. Have you ever seen an angel from hell? Yes it is Lelahell!!

As all members have been or are involved in some other projects as well, how does Lelahell fit into this? Is it more extreme, aggressive or ... compared to the other ones?

Lelahell is more brutal and less melodic and complex than litham, less technical than Devast, less brutal than carnavage more modern than neanderthalia and less blackened than Barbaros.

Can you write a bit about the song-writing and how the first release came into existence? How would you describe the music and did you approach your first output with a certain fixed mindset? A certain kind of music you wanted to create?

In the end of 2000's it was difficult to find musician for metal, the old generation disappeared and the new one doesn't exist yet, so I decided to learn to play guitar and practice (I was bass player before), because I didn't find musicians. After that I made some jams with other musicians but they didn't have the metal feeling. So I started Lelahell in 2011 alone with the recording of the Ep.



Most of songs are some old ideas that I had before, so I think that it is sounds a little bit like a mixtures of all bands that I was playing in before.

What about your background in music in general? What bands do you enjoy? Do you prefer the old stuff more than the recent ones?

I listen to the old death metal stuffs: Morbid angel (old stuffs), deicide, cannibal corpse, obituary, autopsy, entombed (old), pestilence, carcass...I like also many new death metal bands (daath, psycroptic,...) and the polish death metal scene: dies irae, lost souls, trauma, hate, sceptic,...some brutal death,technical death, thrash, old black metal stuffs, and more

I don't like metalcore and nu metal stuffs for me this is not metal it is just a fuck'n trend!

I sometimes listen to djent but pleeeeeease without singer! I hate their way of singing!

Would you mind translating 'Al Intihar' into English? What does it refer to?

Al Intihar means suicide; Our music and lyrics don't appeal to suicide it is not depressive black metal or funeral doom, there was one song that had this name but for some reason didn't appeared it in this Ep, so I decided to take this name as the Ep title.

What kind of languages appear on your debut release? Why don't you use the lingua franca for all of your lyrics? Do all of these appear printed in the booklet?

The lyrics are in English and Arabic and a little bit of Spanish on 'Hermanos'. The French language isn't really suited for metal aggressive tones, but maybe on the next release we'll use a little bit, thanks for the idea lol

There is no booklet yet, because this Ep isn't physically released yet. It is difficult to find a label nowadays; the music industry has completely changed. We had many proposals from what they supposed to call themselves labels, in their contracts you have to pay the cost of the release and the promotion!! They don't listen to you music, they do that just for money!

Would you mind writing a bit of the content of your texts? What does Lelahell's music deal with? How does the cover fit into this?

01. Emperor: It's about the emperor Nero, and his 14 years of reign. The history repeats itself, right?

02. Al Moutanabi was an Arab (Iraqi-born) poet. He is considered as one of the greatest poets in the Arabic language. He had a great pride in himself through his poetry. I choose one of his most famous poetry to describe the egomaniacal nature of humans

03. Into The Past remind us all the evil man may have done throughout its existence: destruction, murder, lies, disasters, etc. .. And he continues to do

04. Al Ihtiqar Just few words and some melodies to describe the despise

05. Hermanos A story of friends who were at the beginning like blood brothers, but life goes well change things

06. Freezing Moon mayhem cover

The cover artwork is a suicide act, so maybe when you'll listen to Lelahell you'll suicide, hahaha!

Interestingly, you have a cover of 'Freezing Moon' on your debut release. Why did you pick this track and why did you not simply play it like many bands to do it? In your own words, how would you describe your interpretation of it?

We choose this song because it is a great one! And we played it in a death metal version to prove that there are no frontiers in metal, black metal or death metal is the same; it is metal!

Do you have plans for playing live? Is it possible to you to bring your music in Algeria on stage?

We haven't made gigs yet but it is in our plans. We are rehearsing every week, and when we'll be ready we'll start to invade the national and the international metal scene!

In case someone is interested in your music, how and where can this person buy your stuff?

As I said before our EP isn't released yet, but just drop us an email and we'll send you download links

How can people get in touch with you?

You can contact us by email at: lelahellband@gmail.com , visit our myspace: <http://www.myspace.com/lelahellband>

Some closing comments if you like

Thanks for your great support! And stay underground!

Lelahell – Al Intihar (unreleased)

(Algeria; Death Metal, Thrash Metal)

6 Tracks - _ _ - (27:01)

<http://www.myspace.com/lelahellband>

The members behind the Algerian band Lelahell are not new to the metal scene and go back some days. Maybe this is also a reason the band does not play black metal, which tends to be too limited in terms of the complexity and arrangements. Rather intense music is offered on this their first output and it takes only a few second to unleash the band's fury.

Or is it a straw fire? Even though the band sets quite a pace with the opener, they are actually not able to keep it up. Now rather brutal death metal, then melodic, then a bit progressive ... etc. The Algerians are experimenting on their debut output and attempt a variety of styles and concepts. Such should definitely not surprise anyone, but adds a strange nuance to the entire listening experience. Yet the track 'Emperor', with its nice solo parts and changes in the tempo and despite a slight lack of innovation, might indicate what kind of music they should attempt to compose in the future. The reasons for using this gurgling voice remain hidden though; it seems arbitrary and without any kind of cohesion with the rest of the material.

'Al Intihar' offers music that switches between aggressive and doomy; brutal and progressive; modern and old-school. It is a bit of everything. There are hints towards Vader, the Danish band Koldborn or the Dutch Altar and the strange instrumental keyboard track 'Al Moutanabi' adds a surprising symphonic touch to the release.

Freezing Moon:

Over eight minutes in length and can be referred to as an extended version. The music feels considerably slower than the original and gives a clearer impression of death than black metal. Some additional minutes towards the end have been used for throwing in some sounds of the night: screeching of bats and wind or so. Actually, it can be debated whether something similar should have been woven into the composition in order to break up the flow of the music a bit. At least they tried something out of the ordinary routine.

Well, Lelahell did a good job on their first release and despite the inconsistencies in the concept, it is a pretty enjoyable output.

Interviews

Passion for Sorrow

Hello there ... who am I addressing and where are you from?

Hi, I am Fedor, the singer and guitarist of Passion For Sorrow. I am from Slovakia but living in Prague, Czech Republic

Did you have music classes or are you self-taught so to speak? When you did you learn an instrument?

Uninfluenced self-taught :). I was attending singing lessons for few months but then I decided to stick to growl as I am really horrible singer :D. I have learnt to play the guitar some 11-12 years ago, at my 18.

Had there been a particular sound or album that made you start your adventure in the metal realm? Are you still able to enjoy what fascinated you in these early days?

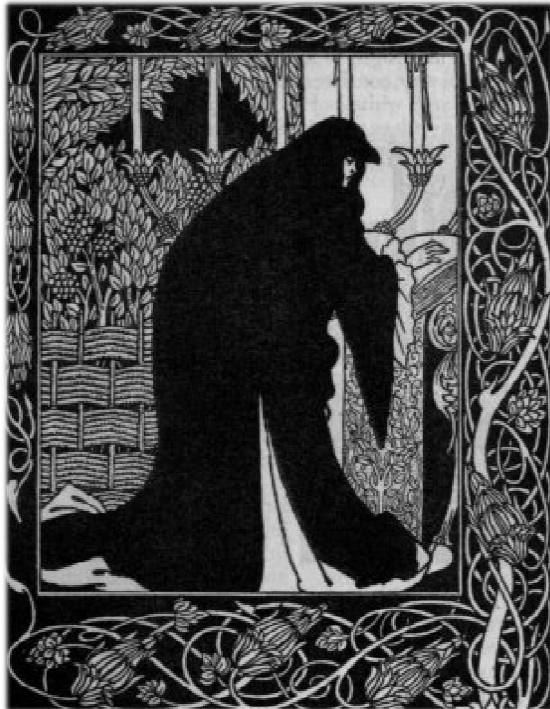
No, it was general love for metal and guitar playing. I am always fascinated when I finish a good song and then listen to it with closed eyes.

Before plunging into the sphere of Passion for Sorrow, why not spend a short time on a band that existed before it: Alone in the Dark. Would you mind writing a bit about it? When had it been started? What kind of music did you play in it?

AITD started end of 2003. No experiences that time, we were just a bunch of young guys eager to play in a band, on the stage, creating their own songs and loving metal. It was our innocent child :). I really enjoy memories about AITD, also side activities of this „best friends circle“ band will stay forever in my heart. We are still good friends but unfortunately we don't meet so often anymore since I live in Czech Republic. We have played basically the same genre as PFS, but without keyboards. Just at the end we added this instrument. Actually PFS is continuation of AITD! We will also play remakes of AITD classics in PFS as I think they are pretty good and it's pity that haven't had a chance to be better presented to the fans. I think some of them will pop-up on our debut as well. I was asking Matej, the guitarist of AITD, with who I was writing the songs if he doesn't mind to use his material. He was very positive and supportive.

How many releases were spread and why did it actually disband? Does the music still have a charm for you?

There was only demo release in 2005 and it disbanded because I got a good job in Czech Republic after university, so I moved there. We were not professional enough to handle it on a long distance. We agreed to bury the name Alone In the Dark and separate. Then they continued for a while playing



together but it did not work... I also continued alone – that's how PFS was based, the material was already written for AITD! The music has definitely still charm for me, that's why I want to remake some of the old pieces into PFS.

After that Passion for Sorrow had seen the light of day. Could elaborate a bit on the genre this band plays and your reasons for picking it?

Well, I was listening to a lot of genres of metal and all the time my favorite is Scandinavian melodic death metal (mainly Swedish). I also like doom with a bit of gothic, that's why those were combined together in my songs. The reason for picking this genre was only matter of taste. Last year I also listen to a lot of progressive metal, so maybe this influence will come into new songs.

What about the line-up? According to the Metal Archives it seems you are along with it right now? Also your homepage do not indicate that something has changed. Do you prefer to work alone?

The situation with line-up in PFS was up and down, band/project all the time. Now PFS have new fresh line-up again. This time I was lucky to meet those guys :). New team is fully motivated and everybody is putting some effort into the band. We have even naturally splitted the roles – I am songwriter, drummer Hado is Management, guitarist Mirek is HR, bassgitarist Robert is PR :D. Keyboardist Medouch is the freshest one, so he have at the moment only a role of „the evil“, which is also needed :). I plan to restart completely our official web page, that's why it's not actualized (maybe meanwhile this interview was released, we already managed to do it). I can write songs alone, also in team. Depends on the taste for music of the people. If it's similar, in that case I prefer to work with someone, the songs are better when there are more ideas. I have had good time writing songs with Matej in AITD. Now guys in new line-up wants to leave it on me. I don't have problem with that and I will also listen if they have some ideas. When it comes to the band or solo project question, definitely band!

I remember that you we had some discussions about your music when you offered it as a download for the first time. Do you feel that they are in a stage in which you are satisfied with them or might they change a bit more in the future? What about the song-writing in general; is this something only you have to deal with or are others involved as well?

Actually I am quite satisfied with composition and general look, I would change only the sound. I will not look back and better focus on new songs. I am sure there will be some better in the future. However, the songs from demo are planned to be on a debut re-recorded and re-mastered together with new songs. How I mentioned in previous question, at the moment I am writing the songs alone.

Why do you use English as a language? Do you use it because it is easier to reach out to fans outside your local sphere?

English is simple and international, Slovak or Czech sounds a bit weird in metal by my opinion :) You need to have very good lyrics for that also, so the melody of the language doesn't destroy your song... Anyway we will have one song in Slovak, remake from AITD.

How do you feel about modern sound elements: noise textures, ambient layers and sound samples. Is this something you are able to enjoy in music and is there a chance you might consider using them for your own band? Or will PfS remain conservative in this respect?

I like more classical, „live“ form of ambience. For example in keyboard section we use Cello, Viola, Violin, Piano all together, sometimes complete opera samples. Those are very natural and pleasant sounds. I think artificial sound would only disturb in a genere we play. But I like bands like Fear Factory, Messugah or Waltary -Space Evenue album... So never say never ;)

There is another band you play in and it goes by the name 'Et Moriemur'. What kind of music is performed by them and how have the responses to the debut album been that had been the light of day in 2011. How does the sound and style differ from Passion for Sorrow?

I have left EM at the end of 2011 after recording of the debut. EM was doom metal band, now the plan is to go deeper into funeral waters, which is quite boring for me. The debut was successful, they are even nominated by some magazine for newcommer of the year. Style difference is simple, PFS is much more dynamic and contrastfull – it's more melodic death then doom.

Do you have had some live experiences with any of your bands so far? How have they been and how large have the audiences been?

In general I enjoy live performances, so all of them were nice for me. With AITD we had about 7-10 gigs in small clubs up to 50 people. The biggest was in Nitra/Sk in 2006 with more than 100 people I guess. With EM I have played about 15 gigs, the biggest were in Prague with Silent Stream of Godless Elegy – about 200 people and Open Air Festival Apocalyptic Form of Death in CZ – about 100 people watching. With PFS I had only one concert in the past – about 50 people. With the new line-up we plan to start concerting in one-two months.

As your first band had been a Slovakian one and as your current ones are located in the Czech Republic, it might be interesting to know whether there are differences between the metal scenes? Is it possible to identify a certain style or sound?

I would say the scenes are pretty similar like everything else between SK and CZ, only in CZ there are better conditions. I don't have a good overview, but I would say grind-core and brutal death are pretty popular here. When it comes to the sound, I think top bands here has world class sound, so you cannot recognize from which contry it comes only by the sound. With semi-popular or beginner bands it's maybe different because they are not willing to afford professional studio and they are making amateur home recordings (same for PFS demo). But still I don't know about any „CZ or SK“ clue or pattern in the sound of local metal bands.

Would you mind to name some bands you like from each country? Maybe even explain your reasons for picking them a bit

Slovakia I think has pretty high level brutal death and grind core. I like Craniotomy, Chemotherapy and Attack of Rage even it's not really my style. From more melodic stuff I like for example Depresy, Thalarion, Disanchely, Doomas, Ethereal Pandemonium (I don't know if they exist anymore). In general they are death or black metal bands with catchy melodies more or less. Then one doom metal band – Morgain, I was listening to them when I was living in SK.

From Czech scene I like Ador Dorath, Interitus, Silent Stream of Godless Elegy, Dissolving of Prodigy (disband), Mindwork... Death/doom/progressive – everything what I like the most, that's why I picked them.

What about some new music ... do you plan to release something soon?

New material is in preparation. We plan to release debut CD this year.

In case someone is interested in your music, how and where can this person buy your stuff?

He can order by email – by now we have only the Demo for 4EUR - the contacts and information he can find on our official site www.passionforsorrow.com

How can people get in touch with you?

By email fedor@passionforsorrow.com or visit our concerts in the future

Some closing comments if you like

Thank you for opportunity to present my band in this nice net magazine. I hope it was interesting for the readers :). If you would like to read more, please visit our web www.passionforsorrow.com. There you can download also mp3s. Or for any more questions feel free to contact me.

All the best to A Dead Spot of Light!

Sabazius

Why don't you introduce yourself a bit. What role do you play in the band?

I'm Steve, and on record I'm the vocalist in Sabazius. Nev deals with all the other aspects of recording, such as programming, guitars, bass, mixing, mastering, etc. Nev's the primary riff writer in the band, and I generally deal with the lyrics and themes.

Could you elaborate a bit on the background of the band Sabazius? Where did you take the name from and is there something you intended to express through it?

The band as it is now is kind of an incarnation of earlier ones Nev and I were involved in with our friend Pier Makanda, who incidentally is now doing our artwork. Pier moved back to South Africa, so Nev and I decided to start a new band together, which carried on some of the ideas we'd worked with in the past, but was also a fresh project.

The name Sabazius comes from an ancient Phrygian god that became incorporated into the mythology of Dionysus. The name, as far as I'm aware, literally means 'torn apart', referring to some of the myths about the two gods. Dionysus being the god of music, madness, performance, and ecstatic intoxication, amongst other things, meant he seemed a suitable theme for the band. There's more to it than that, but that's one of the reasons why we chose the name.

Why did you start the band anyway? Was there some kind of band you wanted to pay homage to? Looking back, then how do you see your origins from today's perspective?

We started the band as we wanted to make music that we personally really like. It wasn't so much of an homage to anyone else, more a case of carrying on what we'd been doing on and off for the previous few years. I'd wanted to be the vocalist in a band for years, and Nev wanted to go back to guitar, rather than being the drummer, so we started writing with that in mind.

We originally intended to be a live act, and once we'd written a few songs, get a drummer involved, but once we'd written *Terror Is Thy Name* we changed our minds. We basically decided there was little point playing a song like that to a half empty pub in Brighton, so we stayed as a two piece studio band.

Looking back, I'd say we're both really proud of what we've done. People have heard of us via word of mouth, rather than from any publicity, and it's great to get emails from people in various countries saying they like what we're doing. We essentially write to please ourselves, and so it's great that people are kind of coming along on this trip with us.

We never really looked ahead or had a plan of what we were going to do, and we certainly didn't plan to do an album as ambitious as *Devotional Songs*. What we've done has just been a natural evolution from the early ideas to where we are now. I'm not sure either of us thought we'd be in our early 30s and still doing this. Bands generally last a few years, but Sabazius has been going for six years now.

As the band has been founded in 2006 (Source: Metal Archives) and had their first release spread in the same year, it seems that you must have had something definite at hand back then, or? How long did it take you to get your first output done?

The demo came together very quickly. I'm having to think about this, as it was quite a while ago! Pier moved away in June '06, and I think we started writing as Sabazius in the July. We had loads of tapes of jams that we'd done as a three piece, and that's where the long songs and riffs idea came from. We liked that hypnotic nature of a riff being relentless, plus we'd got used to listening to 30 minute stretches of music.

As I said, *Terror Is Thy Name* was the first song we wrote, so that's why that one ended up as the demo. Nev had written the first half before we even met up, I already had the lyrics and the riff that went under them, so we had 20 odd minutes straight away. We wrote the last riff together, added the last of the words over that section, and Sabazius had begun! I think we wrote and recorded the demo in one, maybe two sessions. It was pretty quick.

Your debut album, released two years after the first output, has some interesting elements. Especially the opener with the various kind of samples is intriguing. Could you elaborate a bit on the topics that you have dealt with there and why you have picked them? Who is Swami Vivekananda and why did you pick the work 'Kali the Mother'?

Glad you thought it was interesting! Looking back, it's pretty raw sounding, especially the drums!

The topics we started with stem from the older incarnations of the band really. The lyrics for *Terror Is Thy Name* were going to be used on an old song Pier had written, but as that was never going to get finished, I thought it would be a suitable starting point for Sabazius. Specifically, Vivekananda was a disciple of a man named Sri Ramakrishna, who was a very famous Hindu mystic from the 19th Century. Kali is intrinsically linked with this band, so starting with a hymn to Her was why we did that song.

Lovecraft, and in particular the Cthulu mythos, had always featured in songs we'd played before, and once we'd started writing *Death's Eternal Sleep* it just sounded like that kind of a vibe to me. It sounded like an invocation, with the quiet start, building up to the crescendo in the middle, then the weirder sounding riffs towards the end. Both that song and *Terror* are hymns essentially. Well, to me they are anyway!



Occult came from that sample you mention. I was training to be a Religious Studies teacher at the time, and I was working in a very Christian school when I found an old tape with that on in their office. It was too good to not use!

XXIII is a bit of a one off. We recorded that live, and neither of us could hear each other at all whilst we were playing it. One of our friends had died not too long before we played that, and he had a thing about the number 23, so we named it that after him. There're lots of other ideas about the number 23, which it is also a reference to, but specifically that one's a tribute to Joolz.

The version of 'Terror Is Thy Name', would it be the same version as on your first demo, or did you work on it for this new release?

No, they are different versions. The guitars for the demo were copy and pasted to the right length, whereas on all our other recordings Nev plays them as you hear them. Nev recorded the whole album in one go to get a consistent sound right the way through. Same with the bass, and I can't remember if he redid the drums or not. The vocals are the same on both though.

2008 and 2009 had been rather active years for you, because in each you were able to spread four releases. Are you still satisfied with the outcome of each of them, or do you feel you rushed it a bit? Considering 2010 only saw one and 2011 none.

Thing is, the rate at which we release things doesn't reflect the rate that we write them. We finished the first album in early 2007, but then waited a year before releasing it as we were wondering about putting it out on a label. By that time we'd also written DCLXVI, Torah and The Goat.

We ended up deciding just to give the album away as a download, which then led to a few small labels saying they wanted to release EPs on CD. Unfortunately, the labels we were going to work with had various problems, and we waited over a year for some of them too. Dead Pilot put out Goat while we waited for people to sort out DCLXVI and Torah. By then we'd also written Song of Los and covered Sympathy for the Devil, so we just put them out for free too. We eventually just gave up on labels and put the other two out as downloads as well.

We certainly don't rush things. It was more a case of having a backlog of material to get out! We also took a two year break between early 2009 and 2011 as we were both distracted by doing Funeral Hag, and Nev was also finishing his degree, so that's why there hasn't been anything new in a while. We started writing again early last year, and those songs will be coming out this year.

Not many doom bands stretch their music to such lengths as you do. What is the reason for this rather extreme approach? How do you keep the tension up and when it comes to the song-writing, what is the starting point for everything ...and what are the next steps?

The long songs were kind of natural for us. As I said, we'd been playing and recording long hypnotic jam sessions in our previous band, so Sabazius starting with a 30 minute song was just what we did by that point. Death's Eternal Sleep allowed us to work on that slow build up over 20 minutes, and we just took things from there really.

The hour long tracks on Devotional may seem long, but when we'd already written Death's and XXIII, which are both about 45 mins long, that extra 15 minutes isn't that much! Writing songs of that length gives us complete freedom with the dynamics and matches the themes of what we are doing. For example, the outro to Her Crimson Lotus Feet is about twenty minutes of one riff that builds, with a mantra recited over the top, and that's only effective if done properly. If it were only a minute long then it wouldn't have the same impact. I did the mantra in one take too, rather than stopping and dropping back in when I made mistakes.

When we write we just go by the feel of the song or a particular riff. If we think a section needs to be quite repetitive or relentless, we'll have a guess at how many times it should be played, and then listen back to it to see if it's too long or short. Quite often we'll end up lengthening sections, but we have been known to realise when something's just too long!

Song writing usually comes from Nev having a few riffs, and we'll pick one to start with, or Nev will have put a rough structure of a few ideas together already. We work on structures together from that initial point, and often work out chunks of songs as we go, either something there and then, or maybe adapting an idea I may have or one Nev has saved away somewhere. It entirely depends on the song. Some are completely Nev's composition, most are both of us, and a couple are mostly my ideas. The majority though stem from an opening riff or two that Nev has written, and we go from there.

Are you very critical in terms of these approaches and do you move away from ideas at times? Do you need a special atmosphere or mood to compose such music?

I'm not sure critical is quite the term I'd use, as Nev and I just simply seem to agree on what we're doing. We generally work with the idea that if either of us don't like an idea, it just gets changed or scrapped, but on the whole we both work along the same lines. It's more when we go away and listen to the songs in our own time that the ideas get set in stone, as we can then objectively listen to what the sounds are doing, rather than concentrating on individual parts; we can take the whole song in, rather than just the last five minutes. There's no specific mood when we write, but we do check we're achieving what we want to when we finalise and mix the tracks.

Do you plan the use of samples or can these be a starting point as well? Can the same be said about poetry?

We always start with the music when we're writing a new song, but in addition I always have ideas of lyrics, whether they be text or poetry, that I am thinking of using at some point, so the two aspects tend to coincide immediately.

The thing is, thematically, Sabazius works on a few levels, which people can take from however they want. It wouldn't take much research to find the origin of the lyrics which I haven't myself written, and so people can make their own minds up as to why they were chosen, or what it means to them.

Sabazius for me is both autobiographical as well as my conveying ideas which I wish to express. The whole band is conceptual, and there is a chronology of things being said, but at the same time each song is a piece in itself. From this perspective, the name and lyrics are the driving force of the band, and are the starting point and end product of what we do. From Nev's perspective, I guess, it's his desire to compose expressing itself, and the whole recording and production is his art in its own way.

We quite often are referred to as being religious themed, but whilst that is an aspect, it's not the be all and end all of what we are doing. There are kind of layers, which all come together. The idea for the name of the new album was around before we'd even finished Devotional Songs, and that was in my mind when we started writing the songs for it last year. However, we still started principally with the music, as the tracks need to work instrumentally as well as with vocals over the top.

Sabazius' music tends to have some kind of gentle flow in it. Could noise and sharper contrast play a role on future releases?

Possibly. We shall have to see. Nev has a keen ear for sections of songs going from one to the other in a way that sounds good to him, possibly because he has more of an idea on composition than I do. His degree is in Music Composition, and he's studied music a lot more than I have; I'd happily jump from one key to the other between riffs, whereas he tends to keep things more in line than that. It depends entirely on the song, and whether we feel it would need such a sharp contrast to achieve what we are trying for.

'Sympathy for the Devil' has been your one and only cover version so far. What had been the reasons for picking it? Did you have had a definite idea of how you wanted to interpret it or came this through some kind of process – after several attempts for instance? Do you have plans on some additional ones?

At the time, in late 2008, we had quite a few of our own songs that we were waiting to release, so we thought we'd cover a song for our own entertainment, and if it was any good, we would release it. We decided against a metal or doom song, and wanted to do something a bit more interesting that would be in keeping with what we were doing, but also not exactly like the original.



One of the contributing factors at the time was that I had just got into Kenneth Anger's films, and felt something with that vibe would be good. Nev and I both like 60s and 70s music, but Sabbath would have been too obvious, so we had a think about Led Zeppelin due to the Page / Anger link. We tried Stairway to Heaven, but it just wasn't flowing at all, so I suggested Sympathy, as it's always been my favourite Stones song, plus it ties in with the whole end of the 60s thing.

It came out in the way that it did in the same way that all our songs do really, apart from we already had a chord sequence and song structure to follow. It's just very slow, and if you sped it up and removed the distortion it'd sound a lot

more like the original than you might realise.

We did start another cover few years ago, but didn't get around to finishing the draft. I'm sure we'll finish that at some point, and we have been toying with the idea of doing some metal songs that we liked when we were younger – Slayer or something. We're working on lots of new ideas at the moment, so we'll do a cover if we have a lull again this year. Maybe at the end of the year.

How do you see the tension between an interpretation and a 'close to the original' cover version? Is there one approach that you prefer? Is the former more interesting, because the band is actually able to add a different kind of atmosphere and identity to a composition?

It depends really on the band in question, and what song they are covering. Some songs need to be done as they were originally recorded, note for note. For example, the Sabbath Tribute albums have some interesting versions on them. The version of Wizard on the first one sounds fantastic as a straight ahead cover, whereas the 1,000 Homo DJs version of Supernaut works brilliantly as an interpretation. Monster Magnet's Into the Void is great too, and they really take ownership of the song.

I do think a band should put their mark on a cover, otherwise you might as well listen to the original, but whether you restructure it, etc, is subjective.

What is 'Devotional Songs' all about? Two extremely long compositions, 'wrapped' by two shorter ones. This contrast is something you have hardly dealt with. Can you elaborate therefore the concept a bit?

I'd rather leave what songs and albums are about to people's imagination and own interpretation, but there are a few obvious layers to Devotional. It's partly two devotional songs to Kali, but it's also an album about Sri Ramakrishna. For me, it's also an album about my beliefs and my experiences at that time. You can also treat it as one ritual, which is why Asana begins and finishes the album.

The lengths of the track might give the impression of some kind of ritualistic inspired music, which through the distinct monotony in the arrangements creates in the mind of the listener some kind of trance. Yet, your music never heads for this direction, due to the amount of variation in the arrangements. Did you ever plan to venture into this direction? How would you respond to this aspect generally?

The music is definitely ritualistically inspired, both from our interests in religious music, to our usage of repetition to make certain sections of songs relentless and hypnotic. Whether you believe in religious practices or magick, or whatever, meditation and mantras have a physiological and psychological effect, which is one of the areas we're interested in.

However, we do also want to keep things interesting to listen to, so we do vary our arrangements and try to keep things varied to hold attention. As much as we are labelled it, we aren't a drone band, we're a slow doom band. There are ritual elements, and that may be something we explore further in the future, but all our songs develop from one to the other, so we'll just see where we end up in a couple of years' time.

Today the life is rather hectic and people do not have much time they can spend on music, so how would you 'sell' your music? Why should someone give Sabazius a try?

I'd argue that they should make time for music. Why not? Take a day off from your job, do something you enjoy, and stick Devotional Songs on in the background.

It's very easy to fall into the trap that very unimportant things are important. You can leave any job at any time if you hate it. You are only going to live for so long, so why have regrets? Take the day off from your busy schedule, paint a picture or read a book with some doom in the background, or sit in a darkened room with headphones on and listen intently to where the music takes you.

People won't have much choice if they want to listen to the new album all the way though as it's four and a half hours long. Imagine how much of a more productive day you'd have if you sat and listened to it and learnt something, or produced something that will outlive you, rather than making money for someone else. Walk around a museum or art gallery for half a day with us on your mp3 player, let Sabazius accompany you, rather than sitting in your office bored, daydreaming about being on holiday somewhere nice. Haha

Why have most of your release been made available for download? You do not have many physical outputs, so to speak. Is this a way to reach out to the audience?

It's not most, it's all of our releases are free downloads. Why? There are a few reasons. The physical records are nice collectors' pieces for people who want them, so we keep them limited so they are special objects for people to own. However, we'd rather that everyone can have access to what we're doing, so we keep it all free. The songs and albums will fit on cds if people want to make them themselves, but as we don't really use record labels, free downloads and word of mouth allows us to have total control over what we do, and we avoid all the commercial aspects of being in a band.

This way, we aren't bothered about the issues related to sales and advertising. We make the music as we love it, and people can join us too if they want. It goes both ways - people work for us for free, we have people reviewing us for free, interviewing us and advertising us, spreading what we do as they like it too. There are various clips people have made on Youtube, and we really appreciate that. Not everything should come down to money.

Do you think of Sabazius as a band that could hit the stage at some point? Or does the general concept prevent such a thing from happening?

It's not a definitely impossible idea, but it's not something we're thinking about right now. If we did it live, it would have to be a special event or something a little different than the usual gig. There are also practical considerations, such as finding a drummer, whether we'd have to restructure songs to do them, and whether I can actually play the bass and do the vocals at the same time, or just do the vocals. It'd be something we'd want to get just right and make it memorable for the people there.

Could you write a bit about the other projects you are/were involved in? Funeral Hag, Sea Bastard, Killing Mode. What is their status and will they release some new music soon?

Killing Mode was the first band Nev was in, and they went for quite a long time, even after Nev left. His main band was Landmine Spring, who were on Loudspeaker Records. They did a couple of albums, but were fucked over by the label and so called it a day. Nev filled in on bass for a while with Killing Mode after that.

Funeral Hag was a band that both of us were involved in. It started as Nev's mate Jon's project, and when he decided to make it a live band, he got me and Nev involved. Our friends George and Monty joined too, as drummer and vocalist, and we were gigging for a couple of years. Nev left after a year to concentrate on other things, but he played on and produced the Funeral Hag demo. We continued as a four piece for another year, but Jon decided to move on then, so we called it a day. I doubt anything more will come of that band. We did record most of an album, which Jon wanted to produce, but he lost interest so it remains unfinished.

Sea Bastard is me, George and Monty from FH with the guitarist, Oli, from Jovian, who had also recently split up. We intended just to jam and see how things went, but Oli fitted perfectly. We recorded a demo, Great Barrier Riff, pretty quickly, and we're now gigging and writing material for an album which we'll record at some point. I imagine the album will have a tongue in cheek pun for a title too...

Are new releases in sight? Your band has not been particularly active lately.

There should be lots of new releases soon. We were writing for most of last year, and have a few things out very soon. After we released Devotional we wrote a couple of 'mini' albums, which we have only just completed three years later. They should be out this Easter as free downloads. They aren't really where we're at now, but they were too good to just drop. One is called The Watchers, and has three songs on, the other is Parousia, and that has two tracks. Song-wise, they're a bit more like the early EPs than the later stuff we've done; kind of the bridge between Song of Los and Eighty Days and Four.

We also have a split EP coming out with Hesper Payne, via Loathsome Recordings, which will be a limited edition cd as well as a free download. That should be out May 1st, and is a pretty cool release. It's almost the two bands working together to do one song in three parts, and is pretty massive. We're really pleased with how it sounds, and are looking forward to that coming out.

We've also written the music for the third album, and are currently working on the lyrics and vocals. Hopefully we'll get that out this summer, providing we can finish and record it soon. You can have the exclusive on that one; it's going to be called The Origin Of Species, and as I said, is four and a half hours long. It's got three songs on it, provisionally called Ex Nihilo, Sol Invictus, and Finis Temparis. It also has four interludes, so as to break up the onslaught!

We weren't quite sure we'd manage to follow Devotional Songs, but Origin is a pretty big piece of music. We're really happy with it so far, and we hope people will like it.

On top of that we have two new songs for an EP half written, plus a load of ideas in the waiting, so I imagine we shall have a few more things out by the end of the year.

In case someone is interested in your music, how and where can this person buy your stuff?

If you're quick you can get a copy of the Hesper/Sabazius split, or we might have another physical collector piece out later in the year, but other than that you'd have to see if someone is selling one of the ones we've already done. We might put out something else later in the year too, something unusual, but not sure yet. I have a Sabazius painting which is nearly finished, and which I'm going to give away, probably in a competition, so if people dig that, we might do some packages or something. Loathsome is thinking about doing artwork prints from the split too, which has the cover by Brooke from Hesper, but I did the paintings on the inner sleeve, so who knows what we'll do with all that.

We'd rather keep things special if people are actually going to pay their money for them.

How can people get in touch with you?

Now that we're active again, we're trying to be more online. We have a blog/website which has all the info on us that you could possibly want, including contact routes for our other projects and endeavours. The easiest way, that I check the most, is the Facebook page, as that's linked to my personal one, and we also have an email. The links are:

www.sabaziusdoom.wordpress.com

www.facebook.com/Sabazius

sabaziusdionysus@yahoo.co.uk

We'll get around to a bandcamp and all that other stuff soon too.

Some closing comments if you like

Just a thanks really to everyone who listens to us. We really appreciate the feedback from people, so please drop us emails or talk to us on Facebook, and we're glad people enjoy what we do, as we certainly enjoy making the music.

Some people get what we do, some people just like the music, and either is cool with us, so thank you for the support, and we hope to become quite prolific again for a time and see where we end up next year, providing the world doesn't end!

Foxpockets

Who are the members of Foxpockets and what are their roles in the band?

Katherine Simner (vocals and spoons), Jennifer Schamotta (harp and whistle), Samuel Tetley (banjo and vocals), Tim Eastwood (double bass and violin), and me (accordion and glockenspiel).

You have a double bass player, who has joined your ranks recently? Do I have to imagine this performance like it is all too common in the metal genre? Will you head for 200bpm?

Sadly our double bass isn't a pedal. More like a big cello. It's been amazing having a bass filling out the bottom end though. Tim also sometimes uses a bow, which is great for creating a plaintive atmosphere. They may not be as loud, but acoustic instruments are far more emotive.

We may never reach 200bpm, but one of our new songs definitely has a metal influence. I imagined a full drum kit and distorted guitars when I was writing it. The chord structure and rhythm are more hardcore than folk.

A bit more serious, when had the band been founded, by whom and ... why? Was this the first band for all of the band members or do you have had some earlier experiences? Why don't you describe the music of Foxpockets a bit? When you started the band, did you have a specific mindset in terms of the music and how would you place it amongst other artists in the folk scene?

We started the band in the autumn of 2010. We wanted to make something acoustic-based as the band we were in before often turned into a wall of sound (there were seven of us plus samples). We decided to not have drums and use the instruments to create the rhythm. Sam said he'd play banjo (instead of bass) and I got my accordion out (instead of synth).



Our first song had Jen singing opera-style vocals over some weird chords. It was quite good – we should have kept it! We advertised for a singer a few months after and Kate got in touch. She's from a family of musicians and had been doing backing vocals for her dad's band since she was small. She also knew how to play spoons, which we felt was an important skill.

We haven't thought about fitting in anywhere with regards to scenes and such. We just play things we like.

And what about this band name of yours?

Jen and I tried our hands at a little taxidermy with a pheasant we found on the road. When that was (successfully) finished, Jen located a dead fox in the central reservation of the A27. After skinning it we jokingly said we should give it pockets. We still haven't done anything with it – the skin's still in the freezer!

I fathom you have had some musical education or are all self-taught or .. something in between?

Sam, Kate and I are self-taught. Jen and Tim had lessons. I'm not sure what's the best way to learn how to play an instrument. I do think being self-taught frees you from knowing what chord or note 'should' come next in a sequence – you decide based on your feeling for what is right. But then again, music theory is useful for trying to communicate with other people.

When it comes to the daily experience of music, to what degree does folk play a role? Do you try to take influences from non-folk bands as well?

As a band, I don't think folk is any more influential to us than any other genre of music. I listen to pretty much everything – from Burzum to Boris Karlov. Maybe not so much jazz! Tim and Jen listen to a lot of folk – anything from ancient Finnish music to Bob Dylan. Sam likes everything from hip hop to Leonard Cohen. Kate likes a bit of metal, a lot of country and some cow punk.

In terms of the song-writing – is this a group process by the way – how important are the aspect of catchiness, complex structures and variation/progression of motives? Do you plan the arrangements a lot or is some sort of natural flow important to you?

For most of the songs, I come up with the chord sequence, which everyone else then adds their own parts to. Jen's written a few more traditional folk songs, which tell tales of death, revenge and lost love. Kate's also written a couple of songs and writes virtually all the lyrics. We don't really do much jamming. There's pretty much always a pre-thought out structure that we use to build on.

'The Coracle & The Albatross' would be your first (and only?) output so far? Can you write a bit about the history of it, your reasons for picking the title and how long the (dreary?) process had been to get it done?

'The Coracle & The Albatross' was our first EP. It was recorded by Sam, who's been producing his own music since for years. The recording process was fun, fuelled by tea and Sam's endless patience. The name for the EP was arrived at while we were drinking ale at the pub one evening. We chose it after discussing some of our favourite things in the world.

By listening to your music there is often this impression of a slight melancholy in the air. While 'The Nautical Song' has a rather mocking tone. Is this intentional or did you come somewhat natural while you were composing the music? Do you plan to proceed on this path?

There's one quality in music that I look for – a sort of uplifting melancholy. It can be across an entire song or just in the changes between two chords. The sound is what people might call sad, but the feeling it creates is one more akin to joy. It's a internal satisfaction, like the world has meaning. It's hard to describe but it's what I try and capture every time I write the music for a song.

What about your sources of inspirations? Books, the strangeness of our days, or ...?

We all love wild places – whether that's the sea on a stormy day, an untamed woodland or walking across a moor. These places are more inspirational to us than any music. Art and literature play a big part in our lives – artists and authors I know the other s like include Jenny Saville, Kathe Kollwitz, Emily Leonard, Knut Hamsun and Antoine de Saint Exupéry.

How would you describe your local cultural environment and how would you place the Foxpockets into this? Do you continue on some kind of predominant style or is the amount of innovation larger one might expect from other more established/local artists?

Brighton is a famously liberal city. On a typical day you can see someone walking round with a snake coiled round their neck, pass by a totally unconvincing transvestite or get involved in a conversation with someone living in a van. People who look and act normally are in a minority, making it the perfect draw for those who are lost or who don't fit in elsewhere. Every other person is an artist or musician so, although there's not much money here, there's always a lot of amazing things happening. It really is quite an inspirational place.

What would you opinion on folk and progressive or new-music-inspired elements be? When it comes to noise and sound manipulations, to name some examples, would this be something you can enjoy and should the genre open itself a bit?

We're very lucky in Brighton – there's an amazingly diverse music scene. We've been to a lot of noise gigs #– some better than others. Layering abstract sounds in a meaningful way can be a lot more interesting than yet another band playing G,C and D! Not that I've got anything against G,C and D. Bands like Operation Ivy were all the better for their simple chords.

I don't think folk is a particularly restrictive genre. There's plenty of bands successfully mixing folk with electronica (Tunng) and metal (Eftwyrd – the violin on 'An den tod' is great!). I haven't yet heard any jazz folk though. The US is probably developing a jazz folk bomb right now to kill the world.

One of the aspects of folk is narration of the cultural heritage and to break the barriers between the generations. Yet there looms Francis Fukuyamas phrase of 'the end of history' all around us. Has music been bereft of this facet or is it still practised on the local, village level. What would be your opinion?

I don't know how far we'd agree that the 'end of history' will see the prevalence of an EU-style governance as Fukuyama suggests. Tim I know is hoping for an end to all governance. I'd like to hope that we are capable of that.

In terms of folk music operating as a form of oral history, you can visit any village in the UK and find a pub with local musicians playing songs that have been around for hundreds of years. These songs are important to our idea of Englishness and I don't think they'll ever be lost. There are plenty of young people joining in with folk sessions to continue the tradition. If anything, there's been a resurgence of grassroots folk music. A few years ago, very few people played instruments like banjos. Now it seems you can't move for them.

You have hit the stage several times already? How large have the crowds been and what have your experiences been?

We have played out quite a lot – less so recently, as we've been writing. Our first gig was at the White Night festival in Brighton. The city stole the idea of running a 24-hour cultural event from France's Nuit Blanche. Anyway, during our set a baby fell asleep in the front row and a drunk man who'd just been to the soup kitchen in a nearby church joined in on the last chorus. We thought it was a good start.

We've also played at the top of a windmill up in the hills behind Brighton. It was built by shipwrights and its roof is basically an upturned boat. The entire windmill's made of wood and has no electricity – we had to play by candlelight. As we were playing you could feel the whole thing swaying in the wind.

What about the feedback you get from fans. Does this play a role in terms of the song-writing and ideas?

The way people reacted to our songs when we played live was quite influential at the beginning. A few less than enthusiastic reactions to a couple of tracks resulted in us meddling with their structure. The resulting monsters were so far from the original ideas that we scrapped them altogether. I don't think it's really worth listening to what other people say – about anything really. Those who are quickest to judge or naysay are usually the least contemplative and open-minded. Music's such a personal thing – its importance lies in what it means to the individual listener. Not the rabid masses!

Is there a chance to hear some cover version at some point in the future? Maybe even some interpretation of a well known composition?

We play 'Psycho Killer' by the Talking Heads at pretty much every gig. We have lots of time for David Byrne. He's how we all learned to dance. In the future we may do a cover of '213' by Slayer – either that or Arvo Pärt's 'Spiegel im Spiegel'.

Folk Police will re-release your debut output later this year. Will there be differences in the editions? Do you have a release date already?

It's being released sometime in June as part of Folk Police's new 'northwestern' series. The label's expanding pretty quickly and they've got lots of good new music on the way.

How can someone get in touch with you? What kind of Internet sites do you use?

We don't have our own website. Should they want to, people can get hold of us through Facebook and Soundcloud. We're also on MySpace – but, since I found out that it's partly owned by Justin Timberlake we tend to avoid it.

Any other comments?

'It was a pleasure answering these. We're very happy to be involved with the magazine - love both the aesthetic and tone. We hope 'A Spot of Light' continues for many years to come!'

we've also decided the album will be called 'Hope can make feeble ones earnest and brave'.

Chaotic Aeon

Who am I addressing or who would be answering the questions?

Vocals/Guitars: Song Kai

Would you mind introducing your band and yourself a bit? Why and when had it been started and what had the reasons been for playing death metal?

CA is an old-school death metal band found in Sep, 2006. Our (first?) guitarist Wang Yang and I met each other through the Internet. In the beginning we tried to imitate great old-school death metal bands such as MORBID ANGEL, SLAYER, INCANTATION because we all like them very much. At first we just wrote songs for fun. After having many songs we realized that we can do something serious. According to my knowledge, at that time there was not an actual OLD SCHOOL death metal band in China. So the chinese old-school death metal fans gave us great support and encouragement. Then we found Chaotic Aeon.

The track titles indicate a certain fascination for the American horror novelist H.P. Lovecraft. Can you elaborate a bit on your fascination for him?

I do all the lyric parts. I am so fascinated by Lovecraft's novels. The unique mysterious unknown fear are so Chaotic Aeon. Sometimes some certain riffs just popped into my brain when I was reading Lovecraft novel. Lovecraftic lyrics are very becoming for CA's music. But unfortunately, the number of Lovecraft likers in China is very small and people can hardly find a Chinese Version of Lovecraft's.

Is there a chance that you might deal with the Chinese mythology at some point in your future? Speaking of it, how does the Chinese mysticism differ from the Western one; Lovecraft in particular? Would you mind writing a bit about this?

Yes, it is. But so far I don't hear any becoming enough for CA. In fact there are a lot of similarities in Chinese mythology and the Western one, such as the original chaos and the superflood. The core difference between these two mysticism, in my opinion, is that almost all the god in Chinese mythology shares a same archetype. To be specific, one man, or one certain kind of people. And Chinese mythology changes by the time. It's more and more meaningless to me. But western mysticism never fail to fascinate me, especially the Sumerian Culture, Ancient Babylon and the Egypt.

What bands influenced you back and then? Does Chinese metal have its own sound/character or do the bands try to stick to the Western model?

morbid aegel · slayer · INCANTATION and Immolation. There are bands sticking to the western model (and so we are) and there are bands trying to add Chinese characteristic. In my opinion, metal music in China is still on the way developing and it is too early to put so-called Chinese sound in it. I think first we should catch up the western model, then we consider other characteristic. Of course, it's just my personal thoughts.

How would you describe your music? What are the core essences of it?

The motives of me creating are actually from the bands I like and Lovecraft novels. I describe our music dark old school death metal. I enjoy many sorts of music, but CA's core is always old-school death music.

The logo gives it away in some respect. Morbid Angel seems to have had a profound impact on you. Why this band and what albums do you prefer? Are you able to enjoy the latest ones as well?

As one of my favorite bands, Morbid Angel is also our most important model. The way Morbid Angel create the ambiance is not like any other bands. They use no clips from horror/ porn movies. The emotions delivered purely by their music. You hear no sad melodies and no horrible scream, all you can hear is the dark sick and ridiculous music with no sensibilities. It's like seeing a sickly twitching angel stands in the darkness, having its eyes on you with no expressions, not doing nothing, and you never know what it's gonna do... That's the best part I'm crazy for MA. My favorite MA album is Altars of Madness · Covenant · Formulas Fatal to the Flesh. I can't deal with their new album. It's far beyond my expectations.



Why did you pick 'Maze Of Torment' for a cover version?

Then the idea of covering Morbid Angel came into my brain, my first thought is to pick a song from their first album. At first it was Immortal Rites, but later my band and I felt that Maze of Torment is more suitable for Chaotic Aeon. So we finally chose it. In the future we will cover other songs from other MA album.

Solos play only a considerable role in your concept. Is it difficult to play them in a way Trey Azagthoth does? What about a bass or a drum solo?

Trey Azagthoth solo is too hard for me. Not only in the playing techniques level, but also in the arrangement. I can only do my best and the most suitable to Chaotic Aeon in my range. We always be thinking about bass solo and trying to make it work.

What bands and albums do you generally listen to?

morbid aegel , slayer , INCANTATION , Immolation , nile , OBITUARY , Shub Niggurath and DEICIDE... way too much.

A comparison of your three releases reveals that a lot of tracks appear again and again. What are the differences between these outputs; in terms of the sound and production?

The tape demo is remixed and mastered by myself and the first EP is re-remixed and re-mastered by a professional sound engineer; rehearsal is a recording of our rehearsing.

Has the music been recorded in a studio or how did you deal with this aspect?

We recorded in my home. We bought some ordinary recording equipments, learned to use recording softwares and then started. Rehearsal is recorded by an interview recording pen in our rehearsing room. I believe one day we will go to a professional studio for our official album.

The last release dates back a bit. What about new music? Do you have anything planned right now? Do you plan to move in a different direction?

In China, especially in the city I'm living, fewer people like metal music each day, we don't have a proper drummer for one year, so CA has to slow down a little bit for now, looking for new musicians. so I can not really say anything about the new releases right now. As for the musical direction, from the new songs what we have written so far, I can say they are still straight old-school death metal, maybe a little Polish Death Metal taste in it.

How would you describe the Chinese metal scene? How is this extreme music perceived by the cultural environment and are you able to do gigs and spread your music easily?

China has a really small metal music scene, and the fans are more "professional" than most of the musicians. From what I have known, majority of the people have no idea about extreme metal music, and very unlikely they will accept this music style. We play music in our sparetime, so we are not hoping to make some money from it or anything like that, so we can easily get the connection to those kind of gigs that ask us to play, but the main problem usually is the absence of our own band members.

What about radio shows and the sort? Does something like this exist over there? What kind of music tends to fill the airwaves?

No 100% metal program, as far as I know.

Is there some sort of diy/trading culture? How do you distribute your music?

There is no such culture in China, but I've traded some demos with several other bands. The spread is still depend on the Internet and label promotion.

What about the relationship between metal and non-metal? Is there a collaboration between these two factions or does each of them meddle in their own pools?

10 years ago, metal bands and other types of bands played on the same stage, but now we are diversified very well, almost no connections between those bands.

Did you have had a chance to play on stage? How common are metal concerts in China in general?

CA played live a couple of times but not much, the latest ones including Xmusick Metal Party in Beijing, 25th May 2011, with Defiled from Japan and another Chinese band called Explosicum. And a special show in Tianjin, 27th May, 2011.

In case someone is interested in your music, how and where can this person buy your stuff?

You can purchase from the online shop of Pest Prod: <http://shop.pest666.com>

How can people get in touch with you?

our current contact is chaoticaeon@gmail.com, or you can always contact our label Pest Prod: www.pest666.com

Some closing comments if you like

Thanks for interviewing CA, it is very important for us, we don't have much connection with rest of the world, thank you for letting more metalheads get to know us. and we wish to know more death metal fans from all over the world, thanks for your attention, OLD SCHOOL FOREVER!!!

Reviews

Ross Hagen – Eurydice – Incidental music

(USA; Various, Experimental)

13 Tracks (MP3 – Self-released) -_- (18:05)

<http://encomiast.bandcamp.com/album/eurydice-incidental-music>

There is something easygoing in the title of the release. As if the tracks just happened to be; came right out of the blue and into existence. Yes, the Beatles were right with 'Let it Be', but it can be suspected that they had something different in mind back then. Anyway, a different kind of music by Ross Hagen – the person behind 'Schrei aus Stein' – had been presented in this magazine before – issue No. 11 and 12 –, but as this one takes the listener into some other direction, it seems an ample choice to present this project here as well.

Yet, incidental might not cover all aspect that this album tends to deal with. A glance over the track titles reveals a clear reference to the mythical story of Orpheus and Eurydice. Do not expect a complex approach to this topic, because the overall length as well as some tracks simply prohibit this in the first place. A composition with less than one minute to offer, can hardly be the basis for all the emotions and facets of the Greek myth. Overall, glimpses towards it are shed and those familiar with tale will/might/could/should recognize some of the elements.

What might astound is a certain lack of flow. Some tracks – too many to specify them – switch from one kind of approach to another one and might give the listener the impression of randomness in the concept; like it is found in a compilation for instance. Furthermore, the music stretches from field recordings over to ambient, rock and even solo guitar stuff. Without a clear reference through the track titles someone would suspect that this album consists of a large variety of elements without a red line of any sort. Of course, ideas that would back up what had been written about in the previous paragraph can be found, but it is necessary to be aware of them. Incidental ... keep this term in mind.

Is it good? Is it bad? A definite opinion is a tricky thing indeed. While some compositions are able to fascinate – those with a reference to 'Orpheus' in particular – others offer quite confusing approaches, whose place in the overall concept tries to remain hidden from exploration; at least from a first glance that is. Nevertheless, it is interesting to see the old myth broken down to such a few and short elements. As the album is available as a free download from the bandcamp entry, the actual process of acquiring it does not need much effort or energy. Give it a try, I would say.

And while we are at this topic, you might want to give this a try as well:

<http://www.newgrounds.com/portal/view/486660>

Ater – De Aeterna Tragoedia (2012)

(Italy; Black Metal)

4 Tracks (CD – Self-released) - _ _ - (20:18)

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Ater/236294810314>, <http://www.myspace.com/aterblackmetal>

Some years – sounds like an eternity, doesn't it? – have passed since their debut album and with 'De Aeterna Tragoedia' the band provides the listener with fast and aggressive black metal... again. Merciless, often limited in complexity, generally ferocious and well produced. The Swedish band Infernal, early Dark Funeral ... you name it. The amount of bands, whose art is similar to this is legion and the difference between these is often minuscule. Yes, it is an 'eternal tragedy' that this particular type of music has been played by so many bands already.

Well, the performance of the Italians is not bad. The concept had not been reduced to pointless blasts, which appear intersected by some slower moments, but the counterpoints through slower motives suggests a certain kind of self-awareness when it comes to the limits of the band's approach. Ater crafted music that comes with a juxtaposition of fast aggressive and slower melodic facets, which helps to focus everything somehow. Yet, surprising breaks or novelty in terms of ideas cannot be discovered here. The Italians stick to their art, vary it enough to keep the interest up to a considerable level and attempt to avoid too much of monotony in their compositions. There is nothing else... nothing remarkable or outstanding.

The bottom line would be: good music with a certain lack of innovation. Those who have a fancy for fast and aggressive black metal, might want to give this a try. Others might find the whole approach a bit too shallow for their tastes.

Note:

Ask the band about the conditions and where it is available. They are hidden to me ... yes, I had been too lazy to inquire about them.

Depaxis – Nada (2012)

(Japan; Noise)

1 Track (MP3 – Self-released) - _ _ - (9:20)

<http://depaxis.bandcamp.com/>,

<http://depaxis.blogspot.com/>

I do not speak Japanese, which is sort of a problem in this case, because Depaxis are from this country and their information provided by them is written in their native tongue... and _only_ in it. Such is not uncommon, but leaves someone unfamiliar with this language in a strange position. The biography, the additional information on their blogspot entry as well as on their bandcamp one remain untouched and unexplored; my trust in online translators is limited.



Nada – Russian for 'nothing' – might be an understatement, despite a certain minimalist tendency in the music. Well, the concept is quite simple, add a certain fuzzy noise pattern in the background and add occasional and very intense distorted chords. A stark contrast is created through this, even more so once the guitar is allowed to reverberate. The approach varies in certain limits over the entire length of the track and towards the end additional guitar noises help to increase the tension.

Two aspects should be emphasized: one, the track closes in the minimalist noise structure, which renders it somewhat lifeless and, second, in some respect it would be fair to state that the concept on the whole appears in a kind of loop; i.e. it is possible to listen to the track continuously.

A glance on the cover artwork reveals something intriguing: a sheet of paper with the words 'Nada' written on it. Held by a corpse in its hands, while those who pass him by are only able to catch glimpses of it, yet the impressions on their faces give the idea of a certain curiosity. Nevertheless, 'Nada' starts with a buzzing sound and ends with a somewhat equal style. Something has entered the world, disrupts the world/scenery, but is not allowed to persist or even to have an impact to begin with. Harmony, how awkward and nauseating it may be, returns towards the end again ... and the person has left ... nothing. 'The fifteen minutes of fame' are drowned in the endless persistent background buzz; again ... and again ... and again.

Note:

Can be downloaded for free from the bandcamp entry.

Truco Espárrago section:

Picadillo Genital – Feliz Navidad Cerotes de Mierda

(Spain; Grindcore, Death Metal)

12 Tracks (CDr – Truco Espárrago) - _ _ - (9:50)

<http://es-es.facebook.com/pages/Picadillo-Genital/169474243130441>,

<http://picadillogenital.bandcamp.com/>

Twelve tracks, nearly six hundred seconds of music, which makes an average of outstanding fifty seconds per track. Once you consider that some of these have the unbelievable length of four (!) seconds and that three (!!) of them appear in a row (!!!), it seems pretty clear in what direction it all points: strange samples, violent bursts of riffs, a mixture of various kinds of vocals and a certain suspicion in terms of the genre.

Yes, the evidence points into one direction and the everything becomes crystal clear right from the start: 'Picadillo Genital' perform one of the strange combinations, which appear throughout the grindcore scene in one way or another. The focus is rather on the old-school branch and in case of 'Feliz Navidad Cerotes de Mierda' samples from "Creep Show", "Fear and loathing in Las Vegas" and "Bad taste" (*) were used and they add a nice touch to the performance of the Spanish band.

It is a bit difficult to really enjoy this release, because the band never gives the listener any incentive to do so. Once the first two compositions have passed, it all begins to break down in some comical (?) approach, which wakes memories on the American band S.O.D. and their 'Bigger than the Devil' output. Six tracks later, a piece of two hundred and fourteen seconds brings 'Picadillo Genital' back on track, but the question would rather deal with 'on what path' than on the reasons why this happens at all.

'Feliz Navidad Cerotes de Mierda' may be good for a chuckle now and then, but as the entire approach feels a bit forced without much of a flow, the amusement might rather come over a bit dry. Fans of 'Machetazo', the musicians behind PG are huge fans of them, might want to give this release a try. The same can be said of those who have a fancy for old-school grindcore/death metal.

(*) information kindly provided by the label.

Note:

The CDr comes in a strange design and a inlay in Spanish. Reference:

<http://trucoesparrago.blogspot.de/2011/12/tr-014-picadillo-genital.html>

Gur Bruo / Jazznoise – Tiempo De Reacción / Polirritmia Organi (2011)

(CDr – Truco Espárrago) - _ - _ - (46:49)

<http://trucoesparrago.blogspot.com/>

There had been some discussions between me and the label in terms of this release and on the issue whether I would be interested in writing on it. Maybe it is best to clarify something: promos are a nice thing to have, because for the work that you have (or rather will) put into writing, you get (or will get – some labels do it this manner) something in return. Yet the problems should not be underestimated:

- time constraints: sometimes a review and an opinion needs time ... and I like to take it, while a label might not be willing to wait several months until I have made up my mind about a release
- writing style: when it is mine – bought – then I decide on this aspect. Can be a poem ... can be ... whatever.
- Neutrality: when I do not like it and have paid for it, then the aspect of bashing it can be dealt with easier.

To name a few aspects. When it comes to MP3 downloads this aspect has less of an impact, though, and can often (generally) be ignored.

Yes, I bought the CD and this is my review on it. The same is true of the Fasenuova one.

Two tracks and two times more than twenty minutes. In both instances, noise and industrial play a vital role in terms of the arrangements.

Gur Bruo – Tiempo De Reacción (25:27)

(Spain; Noise, Drone)

<http://gurbruo.bandcamp.com/>

Psychedelic, would this term be too daring in actually describing the music? When you listen to the old records of Pink Floyd and imagine them to be wilder, noisier and weirder, then you get a first impression of Gur Bruo's style. There is less structure in everything of course and it more the general idea than anything in terms of the arrangements that can be used as a reference, but it has such moments nonetheless.

Well, the music does not continue in the same kind of way. The next segment would be some minimalist drone-like thing with an oscillating texture and additional vague sounds in the background.



Such a drop in the complexity is not surprising at all; unlike the electronic beat pater, which joins this after a few minutes. Contrast can be a good thing, but the way in which something minimalist is taken over first by this rhythmic pattern and then noise manipulation, might confuse the listener in some respect. In a matter of minutes everything changes and references to the early segments do simply not appear. An entirely different direction, this is where everything heads towards, and it takes some time until the drone texture – surprisingly – makes a return. And with this schizophrenic combination the track ends.

It seems the last part of the track is a mocking of the first one. Even though the recitation can be described only in some vague terms, the progressions of the arrangements enable the listener to such a comparison.

As the title suggests a reference to 'reactions', the first segments could be seen as two kind of arguments, which then, due to the process of discussion and exchange, escalate, while the ending represents a kind of merging of ideas – noise and drone. It can be debated whether each of the parts need to have a sharper separation from each other or whether the smooth progression gives a better impression of such a scenario. Nevertheless, the middle part seems a bit too extreme at times, and with too little references to the earlier part of 'Tiempo De Reacción'; from the perspective of the reviewer and the here presented line of reasoning.

Jazznoise – Polirritmia Organi (21:22)

(Spain; Noise, Industrial)

<http://jazznoise.wordpress.com/>

There is a stark contrast between the first and the second band. Even though a similarity in terms of the evolution of the intensity over the length of the track can be identified, 'Jazznoise' are considerably less aggressive and offensive than 'Gur Bruo'. 'Polirritmia Organi' even has some industrial touch at times as well as some strange/displaced electronic beats.

The first seconds are a distorted voice, but only glimpses of the speech can be understood. It is something about experimental music and stuff ... whatever ... does not seem to be too important, because half of it simply vanished for no apparent reason and the more the track progresses, the more the listener actually forgets about this one short introductory element.

Anyway, the music actually opens with a white noise pattern, which then evolves in complexity and structure. Several minutes into the track noise elements and and rhythm patterns (industrial influenced) take over, while the minimalism, and therefore also the peculiar atmosphere that comes with it, vanishes. Interestingly, the concept takes a break at some point in the track and presents nothing more than sounds, which resemble some kind of machinery, whose vague impressions are left alone and hallow through the air spaces.

It does not remain on this level. The hollowness is not allowed to persist and the noise leashes back with a vengeance. The layers become more intensive, (surprisingly dominant) electronic beat pattern enter the scenery and a slight harshness takes over the concept. With some variation this play of styles continues until the end, which leaves the listener with a stark contrast to way ' Polirritmia Organi' had opened.

Maybe it is the occasional minimalism, maybe it is due to the electronic beats, but this second composition is less able to fascinate me than the first. Even though the contrast or the comparison between the opening part and the closing one is interesting and also how everything breaks down is appreciable, it simply does not flow as nice as 'Tiempo De Reacción'.

Note:

The release has no booklet and all necessary information – including the contact addresses – appear printed on the CD. In terms of an inlay, some kind of square thing had been printed on a transparent piece of plastic.

Fasenuova – Ella Está Llena De Gracia (2011)

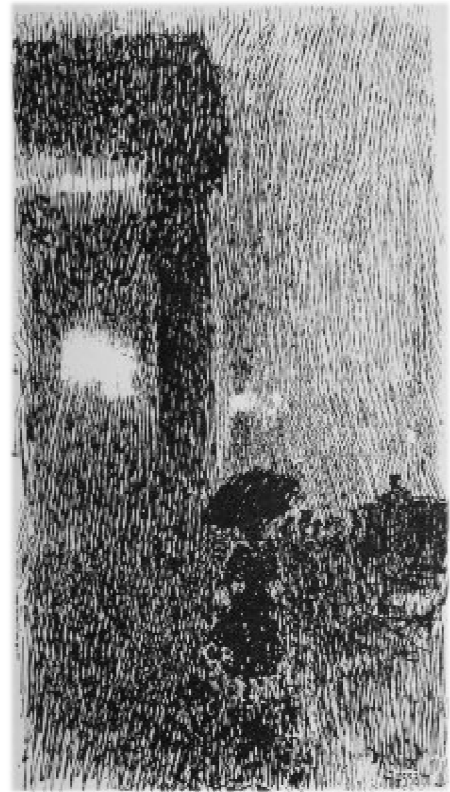
(Spain; Noise, Experimental)

9 Tracks (CDr – Truco Espárrago) -_-_- (44:31)

<http://trucoesparrago.blogspot.com/>

The cover of this release, as well as the booklet, depict some kind of (satanic?) ritual, whose celebration is being done by a woman. Candles, some kind of jewellery in the style of a baphomet and additional accessory is shown and even though the various types of photography give the impression of calmness, order and a ritualistic atmosphere, the music on the CD heads off into an entirely different direction.

Would the music on 'Ella Está Llena De Gracia' be representative for what is generally offered at the place called hell, then Satanists and black metal enthusiasts might reconsider whether their choice of metaphysical world view had been an ample one. Why? Well, the performance of the Spanish band Fasenuova does not offer pleasantries on their recording and at times it is even on levels that encourage to skip certain passages; also considering negative health effects. Yes, indeed. It may be nice to add extreme sinus tones to the art, but I have serious doubts that this comes without any back loop so to speak. Be it the loudspeakers or the ears (through the use of headphones) the strain that is put on them through a piece like 'Ella Está Bien' is not tolerable. Noise can be extreme (and maybe even should be such), but it can be debated whether it should be pushed to excess. What is the point of something that is basically un-listenable; literally speaking? I have a slight tinnitus already and there is no need to make it worse.



Anyway, the overall perception of the release is of a certain complexity and it takes the listener through a variety of concepts. Sometimes it is pure noise, then it is some kind of melody with noise as a contrast, drone and noise appear as well or noise with vocals. There is harsh noise, minimal noise, complex noise arrangements ... and so on and so forth. Now confusing, then clear structured and comprehensible, then annoying and also enjoyable. 'Ella Está Llena De Gracia' is eclectic and gives the impression of an experiment with a variety of approaches: vocal manipulations or styles play a role for instance; also the juxtaposition of conservative musical elements and 'New Music' facets.

And this comes with difficulties and these can be identified in the first and in the last track respectively. How the ideas progress, lead over to new one gives the idea of randomness and unpredictability. A bit more of structure, a better elaboration of the contrasts would have been nice. 'Ella Está Llena De Gracia', for instance, has some odd switches in the tempo, which seem unnecessary, while 'Ella Está Llena De Gracia (MMX)' has elements that appear out of nowhere for no apparent reason whatsoever.

This CD demands attention and endurance in order to be appreciated. 'Easy' music is definitely something utterly different and it can be doubted whether this output can be listened to as an background ambience or the like. Headphones are recommended as well as some time in order to focus on the way the compositions and ideas progress. Such type of CDs is not of a kind I would suggest to anyone, but those who want to experience noise of a rather broad and complex kind, might want to give Fasenuova's art a try.

Note:

The CD is limited 50 copies.

Zebarges – Stay Barges Or Die!!!

(France; Punk, Metal, Satire?, Parody?)

15 Tracks (CD – Ortsid Latem) - _ _ - (36:26)

<http://www.myspace.com/zebargestoobigforlove>, https://www.myspace.com/ortsid_latem_prod

The so-called underground band and labels of this particular scene are a curious thing. While there is some considerable amount of conservative elements in the overall concepts, some bands take their music to quite strange and peculiar levels. Music is expressed for arts sake and not to make money or receive a broader cultural recognition. Such bands could remain in some kind of niche, unless they are able to strike a chord that will thrust them out of it and into the limelight. In case of the French Zebarges this seems to be quite ... unlikely.

Well, it may be a bit of a speculation, but the title of the release seems to refer to a village in France, 100+ inhabitants, whose only notable place of interest would be the church; judging from the bleak impressions provided by Wikipedia. The reasons for staying in this anaemic hell hole remain hidden, because the life in such a lone place, all freedoms put aside, chokes or drains the modern spirit out of one's soul. Oh, how Thomas Bernhard had been right ... Flee it, abandon it, and do never ever dare to return.

Or is the title actually a parody on the life in a village?

Whatever the background of the third release by the French band is, it is hard to perceive it in a serious and neutral kind of way. It has not so much to do with the samples, whose part creates a curious counterpoint to the general flow of the music, rather the way in which the songs are approached leaves a (slightly) amusing – or confusing? – touch. The timing is off the limit, the vocals are expressed in a rather free style and the music twitches to and fro between various types of genres. Punk, metal, (southern) rock and the like have a share on 'Stay Barges Or Die!!!', but the listener is never granted a consistent flow or progression. 'Zebarges' play music and seem to give a shit. Maybe the track order came in such a way: each of the compositions received a number, had it written on a piece of paper and thrown into a box. The order in which these appeared again made up the actual list on the album.

Leaving this aside, someone unfamiliar with the French language faces the impossible task of penetrating the jokes or the humour on this output. The suspicion that it cannot be taken seriously looms brightly above it all, but it is hard to laugh about something that cannot be grasped. While someone can join in a laughter, doing the same about something incomprehensible seems to be schizophrenic. A short glance over other reviews made available on various sites on the Internet, does not make it easier. In fact, it increases the confusion. Even those familiar with French have difficulties in following Zebarges – or do they refuse to do so?

From a broader point of view one has to recognize (or emphasize) the challenge of thoroughly enjoying this album. It is not only the strange drum-computer that has an impact, also the ever dominant vocals – at least they do not appear on every second of this album – are a strain to the ears and might turn someone off. This band seems to force it a bit too much it at times. All too often the performance is too noisy or too violent/chaotic, while nice melodies are unable to have a lasting impact. Zebarges play music with a certain focus on the strings and attempt to present art in such a way as would be possible to create with them; noise and extreme distortions left out of course. It may be fair to state that this adds a certain conservative touch to the performance, which brings us back to the village in question.

There are limits for a life at such a place of course and these are tested by Zebarges, but they do not dare to break them altogether. Like the village idiot (*), who stands out amongst the other inhabitants of this place due to his extreme and outré behaviour, also these musicians would be an extreme spark in an environment that is all too often rather dull and boring. In such a place they would receive



recognition, are excepted as the exception and are able to thrive on this. Would they abandon it and leave for Paris, for instance, their art would drown in the confusing buzz of a metropolis. Death would be the result. The band seems to know their limits, have a considerable self-consciousness and irony about this theoretical situation.

When it comes to the bottom line of this release, then one has to acknowledge the overall punkish attitude and the consistency of their performance. Especially those unfamiliar with French might find it hard to really appreciate the compositions, but at least they might want to give the band a chance ...

So, stay barges, stay small-minded and local oriented might be overall message of this strange piece of art. I wonder, whether metal would ever reached to today's levels with such a concept.

Note:

Comes professionally printed. The booklet is coloured and has the lyrics.

(*) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jF-CkMpQtIY>

Infernal Command – Demo I (2005)

(Paraguay; Thrash/Death Metal)

4 Tracks (Tape – The Force Records) -_-_- (12:40)

<http://www.myspace.com/infernalcommand>



South-America is well-known for a slight tendency towards the old-school branches of the respective metal genres. This might give listeners, especially those who follow the latest trend, a bit of a hard time, due to the local sound and compositional concept of the music. 'Infernal Command' are no except to this and their first demo comes with the all too common references towards the early days of the thrash and death metal scene.

Actually, this alone should not discourage someone from enjoying a piece of audio art. As long as the overall performance is not riddled with flaws and shortcomings, the approach could still be listenable. Some references would be Massacra (early), the US-American Revenant, Poison (Germany) and these make clear what to expect on this demo output: fast and somewhat aggressive death thrash metal.

With the exception of the first composition – quite doomy – all others are shorter than three minutes, which leaves not much room for exploring riffs and arrangements. It is only natural to find a more narrowed down as well as focussed

approach. No playing around, no needless fillers, no pointless samples or keyboard elements. This is raw, this is fast and this is music stripped down to its basics.

Underground music with no compromise to the modernity. The sound is a bit thin, but the performance is quite enjoyable now and then. Worse demos have seen the light of day.

Gamardah Fungus – Nuclear Winter (2012)

(Ukraine; Experimental Ambient, Noise, Funeral Doom)

5 Tracks (MP3 – Netlabel: Nocharizma) -_-_- (44:39)

http://nocharizma.org.ua/Nocharizma/Gamardah_2.html, <https://www.myspace.com/gamardahfungus>

Post-human scenarios are somewhat prominent today. This apocalyptic vision in which we, our species, our artefacts and all we have ever crafted is exposed to the destructiveness of nature, without any chance of recovery or maintenance, has increased since the impacts of global warming are felt more and more around the globe. The man-made catastrophe brings up a new kind of pornography.

We watch ourselves die, vanish, get extinct. Blockbuster-like films are created in which we are guided through the abandoned cities, whose streets are filled with rubble and the first glimpses of animal life. Man is thrilled by his or her non-existence. Often words like 'harmony' are used to describe this strange kind of mythical scenario in which Homo sapiens has ceased to be, while the wolf and the lamb begin to (or are supposed to) live in harmony (again).

The Ukrainians touch this issue in some respect and it is the supposed folly of man that plays a role here. Not climate change, but the adverse effects of letting a considerable amount of nuclear bombs/weapons explode in the atmosphere are the source of the misery in this theoretical scenario.

The conceptual background is a paper published by Turco, Toon, Ackerman, Pollack and Sagan and has the title 'Climate and smoke: an appraisal of nuclear winter'. In case someone is interested in it, a search in the Internet will lead this person to one site or another on which it is hosted.

1. Big Finger Labyrinth (8:48)

A rather minimalist approach with a focus on a guitar. Its gentle play and melody are actually the only instrument that is worth mentioning. In the background there are some vague textures, additional noise elements – like the cracking of a door – appear again and again. Quite a calm opening.

2. Nuclear Winter (8:41)

With the second track the reduced conception begins to fade already. A crackling sound in the background, a bass guitar plays some chords, while those of another guitar reverberate again and again over the otherwise bleak sound scapes. It takes some time until a trumpet is allowed to join in and disrupt the play that would otherwise might continue to go on for all eternity. Maybe it is a bit too much of a cliché that it had been used here, because through the numerous examples in movies in which a similar impression had been created.

3. Last train To Save Us (8:05)

It would be fair to state that the minimalism continues. A manipulated guitar, whose sounds echo over a background texture: the rattling of a train. The play is varied in some respect over the entire length, but it is generally kept rather limited.

4. World Dying (8:23)

With this track the concept becomes more complex... at least a bit. More samples, a slight increase in the instrumentation and also the contrasts.

5. Another Earth (10:42)

The last track marks a return to the first track of this release. It differs a bit from it though. The sound scape in the background is a bit louder and there is also a short sample with which the composition opens. Aside from this the basic setting and flow shows a kind of similarity to what had been presented earlier. Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that the synth texture reminds on what is commonly used in the so-called space ambient.

Would the end of the world play out in a fashion similar to what is offered on this release, then it would be rather dull and boring. GF offer one concept and vary this in some degree over the length of the album. As there is never a shift in emotion or an increase in tension, the listener is hooked in a very minimalist and sedative atmosphere, which drags on for far too long. Yes, the compositions are listenable, but once the concept is added to them, questions arises ... while answers are not given.

Note:

The release is available as a free download from the homepage of the label. Whether a physical release exists as well, is unknown to the reviewer.

Rise of Malice – Rise of Malice (2012)

(Greece; Black Metal)

5 Tracks (Tape – War Productions) - _ _ - (21:05)

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Rise-of-Malice/316324366525>, <http://www.war-productions.org/>

This self-titled release would be the second output by the Greek black metal band Rise of Malice. Again five tracks are offered on it – including a cover as the fifth one – and also the style shows a striking similarity: raw black metal. Well, the band used only one guitar (+ bass) and a drum computer that led to a thin and narrowly focussed approach.

Actually, the band delivers a solid performance and had been able to write some decent melodies, which happen to suffer a bit from the adverse situation of the line-up and the mix. 'Rise of Malice' take the listener back to early days of the black metal scene and they deliver straightforward black metal with little compromise in terms of the arrangement or the song writing. Solos do not appear, keyboards are unknown to the band, a glance over the lyrics reveals a certain continually used pattern, which is still quite common in the black metal scene and praised as if it had been invented only yesterday. The cover version is a disaster, due to the ultra thin sound and the lack of a supporting guitar.

'Rise of Malice' is a listenable piece of art without much of memorable elements. It does not offend, but it also does not push the limits of the scene. Another tape amongst the endless tides of the underground, washed on the shores of the metal community like a piece of flotsam and jetsam. Yet compared with their debut demo it is at least a bit of an improvement ... even if it mostly in the production.

Note:

Released in 300 copies.

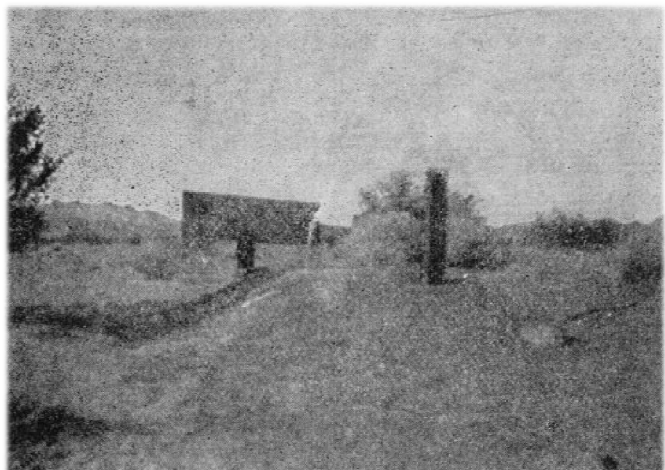
Bad Suburban Nightmare – Highways I

(UK; Drone, Ambient, Acoustic Funeral)

5 Tracks (CDr – Must Die Records) - _ _ - (39:10)

<https://www.myspace.com/badsuburbannightmare>,

<http://soundcloud.com/badsuburbannightmare>, <http://mustdierecords.co.uk/>



Imagine a concert on a stage in a desolate place and no one attends it. Such is the impression that BSN gives to me. There is a lone musician playing tunes that hover through the air, vibrate through it, reach out for someone but will fade after a few meters or maybe even miles and leave nothing but the sadness or darkness that is actually an essential part of the environment and of itself already. Nothing cheering, nothing uplifting, nothing friendly. A story or an idea, impossible to keep it back, impossible not to tell it, an expressed imperative.

While preparing this review and after a first spin the impression of 'funeral acoustic' obtruded itself upon me. Those familiar with the doom metal counterpart will acknowledge the similarities between these two types of expressing or rather creating minimalist (intense) music. Even though some compositions are surprisingly long, there is not much happening in them. Vague melodies are allowed to exist, the tempo is brought down to nearly a standstill at times and even the voice is unable to squeeze out words in all of the tracks. It would not surprise to hear a certain or sudden thud or steps that move away from the microphone and through a hallway. Unbearable ... maybe even for the musician himself. Yet, this is of course not everything. Bursts of energy appear now and then, help to break the monotony of the arrangements; it is there that some references to the American band 'Earth' are given, but here without the reverb, the drums and the noise.

A guitar, an occasional piano and nothing more. 'Drone Highway' for instance has each of these elements. The calm play of the keyboard instrument and as a counterpoint a spasm of rhythms in the guitars. Especially the second appearance of the piano is nice, because the listener feels relieved from the aggressive play of the string instrument, is taken back into a gentler, quieter area. The longest



composition – 'Rollerskate Highway' – is different in terms of the atmosphere and arrangements. Contrasting melodies, more intensity as well as complexity move everything in a different direction. Depressiveness has changed towards something with more bite and in limits maybe even aggressive; energetic should be mentioned as well.

'Highways I' is a trip through various stages of emotions and intensities. Despite a limitation in terms of the instruments, the music does not feel that they would be missing. Percussion elements would certainly disrupt the flow and create a stark counterpoint,

while the piano is a bit under-represented, so much is true. The following references might give an indication on what to expect on this album: Count Beetle (vocals) meets Gamardah Fungus (guitars) meets Stillheten (atmosphere – the dark ones). If you throw these three elements together you get a pretty close approximation of the music of the British artist behind this band.

A curious thing is the aspect of the coda. The reprisal towards the end, this re-enactment of the depressive atmosphere from the opener and the recitation of the lyrics add a strange twist to the album, which comes as a surprise. Why? Well, the longer the album takes, the more the intensity increases. Yet, at the end, the darkness takes over again, returns with a vengeance and mocks the tensions of the previous compositions. In the end, there is the melancholy after all. In the end, you cannot run away from it. The droning parts are nothing more than that of a poseur, who is simply not convinced of his predicament. Depressions come in waves and it is possible to feel such on this album.

Quite a trip ... quite a trip indeed.

Note:

The CD comes in a digipack, with no booklet and no lyrics.

Bedawang – Skin = Deception

(Belgium; Noise, Industrial, Ambient)

7 Tracks (CDr – Must Die Records) - _ _ - (60:14)

<http://mustdierecords.co.uk/>, <http://bedawang.bandcamp.com/>, <https://www.facebook.com/Bedawang>

The title of the release brings up back to the previous edition of the magazine. Aspec(t)'s Skinless 3"CDr, a quite furious and chaotic piece of improvised music, seems to point towards a similar direction. Our outer shell, the organ which is the barrier between our inner self and the surrounding environment, prevents us from closely examining our organs and getting amazed by the fascinating way in which the fluids move through the body. Maybe this is what this Belgian band is referring to as well. Would it not be wonderful to study everything from a closer perspective? A metaphysical interpretation is self-explanatory of course.

A closer examination of the track titles reveals something different though. Except for the last composition, each of them describe some sort of skin disease or infection. You can basically run each of the terms through the Wikipedia search engine and get a result; the English entries are not well written all the times, but it is possible to get an impression of the topic the band intended to discuss. As noted, Blaschko's lines has a different background and deals with something that is quite interesting as well as rarely discussed. Without spoiling too much, it has to do with the embryogenesis of humans.

It is hardly possible to leave these aspects behind a for moment, because there looms the questions on how the music and the title of a track are interrelated. How does 'papilloma' and its audio counterpart fit together? Is this rather intense noise sound to be understood in such a way that it represents the act of removing it from the body? Or, is it the moment of realization by a person or a doctor?

'Hyperttrichosis' marks quite a contrast and captivates through a surprising simplicity. There is the saying that you can see the grass growing, while in this case the same would be true of the hair. Each calm beat might mark a further millimetre ... but musically wrapped in a minimalist dark ambient atmosphere. You get the idea.

These are two examples and 'Skin = Deception' provides a rich set of various approaches of rhythms and noises and textures. How these relate to the diseases might be something interesting to be puzzled about while listening to the album. It adds a nice touch to this concept of noise music and proves as an example for its ability to break with the established and more conservative way of crafting/creating/arranging music.

'Blaschko's Lines' is by far the longest composition on this album and in style it is of a very repetitive kind, with small variation and shifts in the concept. Maybe this has to do with the overall aspect that underlies this unseen part of our body. Its growth, the time it takes to fully develop and the slow pace with which this happens.

Well, in some way 'Skin = Deception' is disgusting, because it reminds us on the unseen aspects of your daily existence, the fluids that run through our body, the strange kind of outer shape that protects us from the environment. Even worse, the sounds do not deal with the mystical and fascinating facets of the human body, but rather with the diseases or certain types of malfunctions or malformations. It is something we like to push back into our subconsciousness, refuse to deal with and ignore ... at times until it is too late; from a general perspective and not coined on the examples on this album.

'Skin = Deception' wants to be explored, waits to be explored ... but the question is whether someone wants to confront these aspects and deal with this often neglected topics.

Note:

The CD comes in a plastic hull and a booklet, but hidden in a small paperbag.

Agatha

(Italy; Noise Rock, Punk, Metal of some sort)

<http://www.myspace.com/agathatrio>,

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Agatha/25665007637>

Getting Dressed for a Death Metal Party (2007)

4 Tracks (CD – Wallace Records) - _ _ _ (10:30)

It is a woman thing, I suppose. Why is it even necessary to ponder over the dress code at a metal concert at all? Or like in this case a death metal one. I mean, just grab a shirt and in case it does not smell (too bad) it should be all right, or? Once some alcohol level is reached or the temperature is heading for intolerable levels, no one will actually bother with this aspect anyway. Furthermore, the mere thought of 'getting dressed' for such an event sends a shiver through my spine ... not getting too much into detail here.

No, Agatha are not death metal. The title of the release looked quite intriguing and had been the reason for buying their CD. Sometimes you wonder how everything relates to each other. In this case it opened a can of worms that lead the writer of these lines into a world of noise rock, punk and some kind of metal.



What makes this release interesting is its density. Agatha play a particular type of music that leaves little room for sitting back and relaxing a bit, pondering about the concept or the like, because they hardly ever give the listener the time to do so. With a throbbing bass in the background, noisy guitars and distorted vocals on top of everything, as well as drums that add a nice drive to it all, the Italians – women in this case – have a well blended mixture. Throughout the album a certain kind of 'middle-finger-attitude' obtrudes itself upon the listener, due to the nonchalant way in which the band rushes through the compositions. Catchy, a bit heavy and noisy ... and quite enjoyable.

In some respect it would be fair to state that Agatha play music for themselves. You never get the feeling they want to deliver a message outside a good feeling or so. Nevertheless, it is a good album, which is over all too soon.

Note:

Well, aside from the music also the design is quite peculiar. The title of the release should be taken literally and it is actually possible to 'dress' the three women through two silkscreen sheets of paper, which can be placed on top of the front cover. So, it is a woman thing after all.

Goatness

8 Tracks (LP – Wallace Records / Basement City Records) -_- (30:48)

Before one track is actually played of this recording, a short glance should be shed on the tracklist. There is some nice messing around with the words or to be more precise with certain famous compositions. It would be interesting to know whether all of these have this kind of reference and maybe even go so far as to include actual elements of the 'archetypes'. At least in terms of 'For Whom the Alarm Tolls' there are some indications which point into this direction.

Goatness, compared with Getting Dressed for a Death Metal Party, is different on numerous levels. For one, the bass has much more of an impact now, while the guitars are given a rest at times. Also the punkish touch along with the 'middle-finger-attitude' has shifted a bit and appears on a lesser scale. The compositions are still noisy and fast, but have more of a sludge character now and then. Has the spirit of the previous release vanished a bit, one might want to ask? While the 'Getting Dressed for a Death Metal Party' came with rather short tracks, whose arrangements were on the spot and delivered fast paced music, 'Goatness' has tracks that clock over seven minutes in length. Hence, more control, more seriousness and such have taken over in some respect.

'Un Univers Dans Une Tasse De Thé' (translation: A universe in a cup of tea; kindly provided by Manu of Methadol) would be the last track on this album and it is such a nice metaphor. Well, as no word about the size of the cup is dropped, it is also a pretty meaningless one, but let us all pretend the complexity a universe could be placed in such an artefact. As someone from a Frisian part of Germany tea plays an important role in the daily routine and is consumed on a large amount. When you visit someone, there is tea. At home, there is tea. The facets of exchanging and living the culture is closely associated with tea. We even have our own tea ceremony – look it up in Wikipedia. Therefore, this

metaphors bears some truth ... at least where I am from.



Agatha should not be taken too serious, which can be seen from their latest photographs that take on the stylistic etiquette of the underground black metal. Goatness is an amusing and quite charming piece of noisy punkish sluggish rock/metal hybrid.

Note:

Can also be downloaded from their bandcamp entry:

<http://agatha.bandcamp.com/>

But you should get the vinyl thing ... because judging from the pictures it looks quite good. (See Discogs for more details on the labels)

D.U.N.E. – Marmo (2011)

(Italy; Post-Hardcore, Noise)

7 Tracks (LP – Wallace Records) - _ _ - (20:48)

<http://www.wallacerecords.com/>, <http://dune.bandcamp.com/>

There is a lot of screaming going on. D.U.N.E.'s music offers an intense bombardment of shouted vocal phrases over a sluggish/hardcore-influenced melody line. Noise plays a role as well, because nothing sounds too pleasing or even clean. Squeaking and screeching effects appear throughout the entire release in various degrees, but they seem appropriate as a juxtaposition to the voice, because both support each other.

An endless amount of breaks and shifts in tempo, quite hectic at times and, due to the overall short lengths of the compositions, music that is rather on the spot and without much playing around. Actually, this is a curious thing, considering that the music has been released on vinyl. It does not seem the best choice for this kind of music, because changing the sides of the disk every ten minutes or so, seems rather like a burden than anything else.

The concept becomes tiring after a while, especially due to the limited variation of the elements. Maybe also the lack of track length that makes everything a bit tiring and predictable after a couple of spins. A 'Pink Floyd' cover is a nice thing to have, but a more daring approach would have been nice indeed. Why not an interpretation; a play with the basic idea? Live recordings from their early days could have indicated a certain direction the Italians could have gone towards.

While the band might strive for ecstasy, they might find it difficult to get their message across to the listener. Well, at least in the middle/long term.

Note:

400 copies. (See Discogs for more details on the labels)

Ebonillumini / Worms of Sabnock – Estuarine / Grand Religious Finale (2012)

10 Tracks (CD – Diptera Records) - _ _ - (43:53)

<http://www.wix.com/quintus666/diptera>

Ebonillumini – Estuarine

(UK; Post-Black Metal, 70s Rock, Experimental)

4 Tracks – (24:15)

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Ebonillumini/119488748111296>, <http://ebonillumini.bandcamp.com/>

First of all, this latest release of the British band Ebonillumini is different, even though it maintains the spirit of the debut output 'The Ebon Channel'. 'Danger', the first track, comes with an intensity that might surprise those who are familiar with their earlier compositions, because it is of a kind the band did not dare to unfold previously. Maybe it is necessary and appropriate to place this contrasting element in the opener in order to set the stage for the latest material, the improved and more developed stuff.

Male as well as female vocals are part of the concept and it is interesting to hear how this plays out in this case. 'Danger' is an extreme composition with a notable portion of black metal, but the voice of 'The Maiden' appears not in her common singing fashion, but rather in a fast and maybe even aggressive form of speaking.



Considering that her voice is generally soft throughout the rest of the album, it startles the listener to a considerable degree. Her parts hover over the melodies, are often an important focal point in terms of the concept and to hear these intensive two segments in 'Danger' might give the impression that the band had revamped their art towards something more intense and aggressive. Even though this is not the case, it is nevertheless interesting to experience a more extreme interpretation of their approach.

While the share of 'The Maiden' has increased, the one of 'The Monk Marshall' has naturally shrunk a bit of course. As outlined in an interview with this magazine – see edition No. 15 – the aspect of duet still waits to be explored and even though shards are presented of it already, 'Estuarine' does not seem the place to do so. Again a sequential order of this facet had mostly been used throughout the album, which is, aside from noting it, of little importance.

In terms of the music, the reference to the Norwegian band '... in the woods' no longer plays a role, because the melodies have become more intense, complex and have lost a bit of the mystic touch of the Norwegians. What of their album could be used as a reference anyway? Well, a bit of everything ... to be frank. Maybe some arrangements still show a subliminal citation, but the general direction has changed. The music flows more between the extremes, takes the listener on a trip through various stages of metalness.

You may want to call it pretentious the way the band presents their art, but in contrast to Emperor, whose later releases broke with their origins considerably and whose revamping of style has not always been thoroughly convincing, these Brits have balanced everything out in a better kind of way. The recurring psychedelic motive in 'Air' is really nice – especially as it is presented in various kind of arrangements – and the same can be said about the opener. 'Water' and 'Land' are both different, because their charming quietness is a welcome contrast to the guitar dominated rest. Progressive, psychedelic (ethereal?) and 70s-influenced post-black metal might describe the performance of Ebonillumi succinctly.

What I do not like about the album is the general concept behind it. One or two tracks – an introduction and an outro –, maybe even a different order of the compositions would have had a positive effect on the overall impression. These two extreme – 1 and 4 – with a surprisingly calm middle part – 2 and 3 – disturbs everything in some respect. There is neither a 'climax' in the middle nor a 'grand finale' at the end. Again, the third composition marks the counterpoint – see 'The Ebon Channel' – and again I am not too fascinating in terms of the arrangement or style. It seems strange to disrupt the flow of the music in such a way... on two outputs.

Music with a fascinating atmosphere and inconsistencies in the execution.

Worms of Sabnock – Grand Religious Finale

(UK; Black Metal)

6 Tracks – (29:38)

<http://www.myspace.com/wormsofsabnock>

Richard Dawkins? Well, a short search via the god of the Internet indicates that at least the content of the sample has been written by him. Well, it is fitting for a black metal band, because the 'god' or transcendental being or however you want to call/describe it, is denounced as a creation of man. This alone might not be that of a big deal. The trouble actually begins with attempt to reason with religious fundamentalists and their 'proves' of the existence of their beloved entity.

Once this opening part is over, the band begins to build up the tension for their interpretation of the black arts. Luckily not the standard set of instrumentation and sound is offered and even though the vocals remind a bit on Shagrath of Dimmu Borgir at times, the music is generally a bit away from their concept of the Norwegians. The British are heavier, have less keyboards and the variation in the vocals that wakes memories on Arcturus.

Each track offers something different. Some nice string player (electronic?) elements, solo parts, nice shifts in the tempo or atmosphere. Even though the band likes to head for the faster regions again and again, this aspect is balanced out nicely over the course of the album. Monotony and boring are two terms rather inappropriate for describing the performance on this album. A glance over the track lengths reveals a certain tendency to mix longer with shorter compositions; with the obvious effect of



course. Neatly arranged and composed art is followed by something that is rather on the spot and tight. Interestingly, this actually works.

Similar to 'Ebonillumini' also this band lives the extremes and contrasts. This is black metal of a peculiar kind, which can not only be recognized amongst a good amount of others, but is actually fascinating to listen to. 'Worms of Sabnock' do not have some clear identity, explored in every composition in a different way or facet, it is rather the broadness and the daringness with which black metal is celebrated here. Purists will sniff at the performance of the British of course. Be it the b-horror-movie-inspired voice effect in 'Demonic of Womankind' or the violin elements in 'Nature's Whore', there are a lot of elements that fall out of the proper scheme. Also the solos are anything than the standard repertoire. They rather give the impression of having been washed again on the shores of the metal scene from releases that have been settled under the dust of time already.

Nevertheless, it is a hectic, furious and maybe even an exhausting piece of art. 'Worms of Sabnock' deliver on a high scale and like there would be no tomorrow. The calmness of the longer compositions are countered by some surprisingly aggressive and conceptually narrow shorter ones. It is a very modern release that, thankfully, does not have the odd and tiresome vocals manipulation a lot of bands tend to use these days.

Conclusion:

Two good bands offer well crafted and clearly recognizable art. Anything of the standard repertoire is offered here and this split album is recommended to those who like to explore the boundaries of the black metal scene a bit.

Friesenblut – Urgeist

(Germany; Black Metal)

7 Tracks (CD – Self-released) -_- - (51:43)

<http://www.friesenblut-horde.de/>, <https://www.facebook.com/Friesenblut>

'Urgeist' would be the debut album of the Frisian band 'Friesenblut'. They call Rhaderfehn their home, a town in a part of Germany in which the landscape is characterized through its flatness and a peculiar type of people: Frisians. They are the world's undisputed tea junkies and no matter who ruled the country at a given time, they were able to get their 'drug'. This ethnicity and tea have a very special relationship indeed. No, Friesenblut do not deal with this topic, their conceptual background has a larger emphasis on mythology.

Also in terms of the music the favourite concept is anything but modern stuff. Darkthrone meets Naglfar could be used as a first approximation: the sound of the former (early) and the vocal style of the latter (later). The music attempts to break out of the ordinary routine of the underground black metal. While listening to the compositions it does not feel like there is much of a monotony. There are elements of the melodic death metal scene in the concept for instance, which help to break this aspect a bit. The Germans are no purists when it comes to crafting their art, even though their preferences for a certain style seem to be fairly obvious.

It is quite an ambitious release, which is also reflected through the lengths of the tracks. Two times more than ten minutes and the one with slightly above four looks a bit lost among the other ones. Nevertheless, there is enough drive and catchiness in them to keep the attention of the listener, even though the mix has ruined it a bit. It is not only the rawness but the way they instruments had been placed in the concept that might give some people a hard time following the band through their album.

When there is one aspect on this release, whose impact is as such as a tire me out, then it has to do with the vocals. As it is often the case, black metal bands tend to have a too large of an emphasis on then, while the play with arrangements is as such as to avoid a clear counterpoint. Friesenblut's conservative approach comes with the all too common flood of lyrics that is thrown towards the listener, without an escape in sight. The result is the impression of a higher pace along with an increase in tightness, but this is nothing more than an illusion. This rush through the motives, this lack of counter elements and a clearer role of the guitars leave the music bland, or maybe even without a distinguishable identity. What remains in the back of the head once the album has been listened to in its entirety are the vocals ... nothing more. In some respect it is astounding how the Germans are able to fill the compositions with texts, because even those beyond the ten minutes barrier have a considerable amount of them.

The bottom line would be: a young band with the usual issue in terms of the song-writing and balancing. Despite a good production, the songs fail to stand out in any meaningful way. Some nice idea now and then are not too enough, once the impact of the vocals is put into consideration. Solid stuff ... but definitely nothing more.

Friesenblut state on their homepage that the reasons for starting the band has to do with an interest in Frisian history as well as the local dialect and while the former has been dealt with, the latter still waits to be explored. Being aware of the difficulties of this local tongue – I can read it and understand it in certain limits myself –, it would nevertheless be interesting to hear (black) metal performed in such a way.

Dat is jo wiet un siet bekannt, dat wi meistens plattdütsch schnacken opt Land.

Note:

The CD comes professionally printed and with a booklet that has the lyrics in it. Their debut demo can be downloaded from their homepage for free.

Chaosane – Chaosmachine

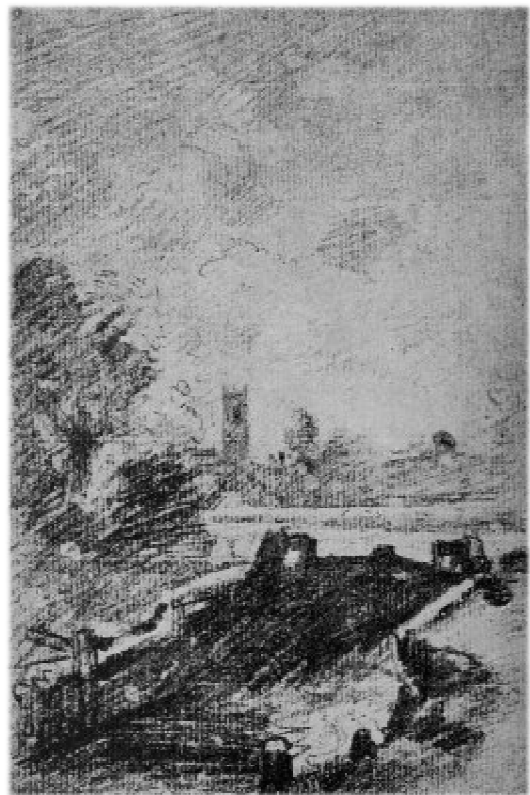
(Germany; Death/Thrash Metal)

9 Tracks (CD – Self-released) - _ _ - (31:04)

<https://www.facebook.com/chaosane>

The name of the release does not stand up to the expectations. 'Chaosmachine' of the band 'Chaosane' might set the bar to rather high levels, considering the amount of intrepid emphasis on some kind of disorder, and even though the music is loaded with quite a lot of energy, it remains in a tame predictable pattern.

Ferocious, this term gives an indication of what to expect on this first release by the Germans. The listener has hardly any room to relax and to enjoy some quiter or calm moments. Aside from a somewhat mocking childish tune at the opening of the album, the band never ever walks away from a rather dense and powerful mixture of death and thrash metal. Well, the next break is only one break away and this is how the music tends to move on. Longer melody lines do simply not exist, because the only real consistent element seems to be the ever appearing switches of the music. The same can be said of the tempo. Even though 'Chaosane' seem to be more comfortable in the faster regions, the speed likes to drop to slower regions now and then as well. Yet it does not feel too artificially or pretentious. The Germans keep the concept somewhat controlled and do not head for too progressive or technical regions of the metal circus.



An important aspect of 'Chaosmachine' are the vocals by 'Anna Titova'. Her aggressive growls/screams create a focal point and she never changes them to something softer over the course of the album. Interestingly, she does not only follow the melody lines, but attempts to create some vague counterpoints as well.

Again ... the vocals are a bit too present on a recording and it would be nice to have a clearer contrast to them; solo elements for instance. Their slight sickish as well as their generally aggressive tone work nice with the music, but there seems to be too much harmony with the instruments. In some respect it would be fair to state that Chaosane should try to live up to their name and offer music that in concept reflects the havoc in a more adequate kind of way.

It is a solid release with some nice moments. Some might perceive the limited approach a slightly tiring, but as the concept is at least consistent and without graven flaws, 'Chaosmachine' can be enjoyed nonetheless.

Note:

Can be ordered from the band for a small bargain ... print on demand/request it seems.

Caves – II

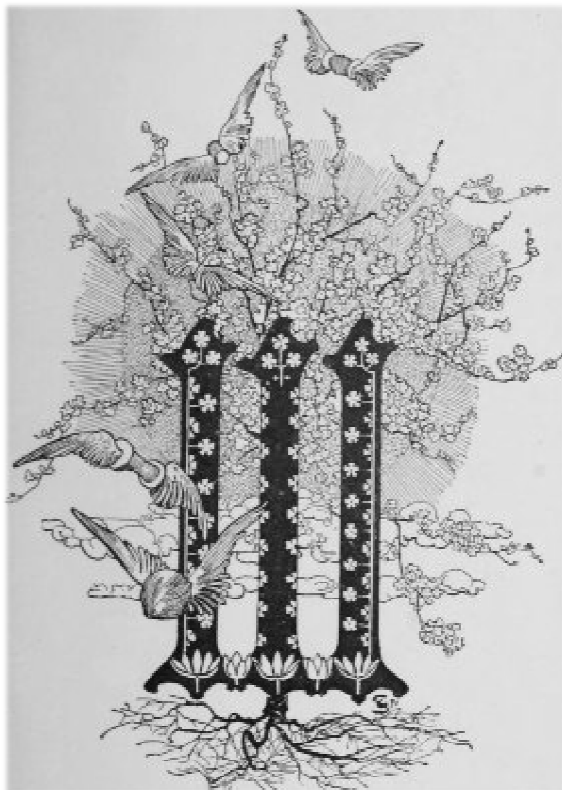
(Denmark; Drone, Noise, Experimental)

5/6 Tracks (CDr – Golemtapes) - _ _ - (26:52)

<http://golemtapes.blogspot.com/>

The vacuous title 'II' gives no indication to the music on this release. It is simply a number, something that might indicate a certain progression in terms of the musical career, but leaves the rest clouded in mystery. In fact, on the homepage of the label Golemtapes, these two letters appear not even capitalized.

Mikkel Reher-Langberg (Shiggajon, Angst, etc.) would be behind this band and the concept that is explored by him might raise an eyebrow at times. Five tracks, each with a different setting and each of them with a title that gives a clear indication about the instrumental setting presented in them: 'Clarinets and Cello', 'For Violins' etc. Speaking of the latter track, due to its monotonous and repetitive structure, it has something often associated with Buddhist chanting. Elements from the drone scene play an important role on this output and 'Caves' concepts never wanders too far away from it.



Sometimes it is merely a texture in the background, while at others it is the defining aspect of a composition. Contrary to what many other bands do, the tools exceed the ordinary one, which resulted in a rich and intense, maybe even reverberating, sound. The best example for this might be the second composition: 'Clarinets and Cello'. How the melody evolves, how the reverb is used and how the various instrument support each other and progress over the length of the track is quite interesting. In some respect it would be fair to point to ballet as a point of reference, especially through the way the tempo, complexity and intensity increases over time. The aspect of contrasting noise structures can be found throughout the entire release in various kind of ways. Imagine folk music bereft of its cheerful elements and played in such a way that the performance gives the impression that each sound, however small and even negligible it might be, is a strain to play or create. Mocking, yes this would be a term appropriate for the performance of 'Caves'.

In terms of the instruments 'Mikkel Reher-Langberg' relied on a mixture between the ones indicated in the titles, while additional electronic equipment is used as a counterpoint or support role. Especially the last track – Coda – (nomen est omen?) falls a bit out of the general concept of this album and presents a richer and more un-natural sound. The electronic vibe of this composition is some of contrast to the earlier ideas on 'Caves'. So, where is the balance? How does one have to place this into the approach on 'II'? Or is it a compensation for the stripped down musical approach presented earlier? A juxtaposition of extremes, whose sum would add up to a nice harmonious ... something?

Anyway, some tracks are a bit short – see the opener and the note below –, but the album itself is certainly able to fascinate. Due to the warm sound, the play with the instruments and atmospheres 'II' falls a bit out the ordinary routine; or at least what can be expected from the three genre tags that had been used above. A live experience of the music could be interesting, because it feels like the artefact (CD) is unable to fully present all the facets of the instruments.

Note:

'Violiner og stemmer for ovartaci' and 'Clarinet at Teufelsberg' were merged for track #1. This is not mentioned on the website of the label, nor does the release itself reveal this change in the track list. Only after contacting 'Golem Tapes' this piece of information had been acquired.

Note 2:

Can be downloaded from the page of the label.

Shiggajon – Streng (2011)

(Denmark; Experimental Folk, Ritualistic)

2 Tracks (Tape/CDr – Golem Tapes) - _ _ - (16:08)

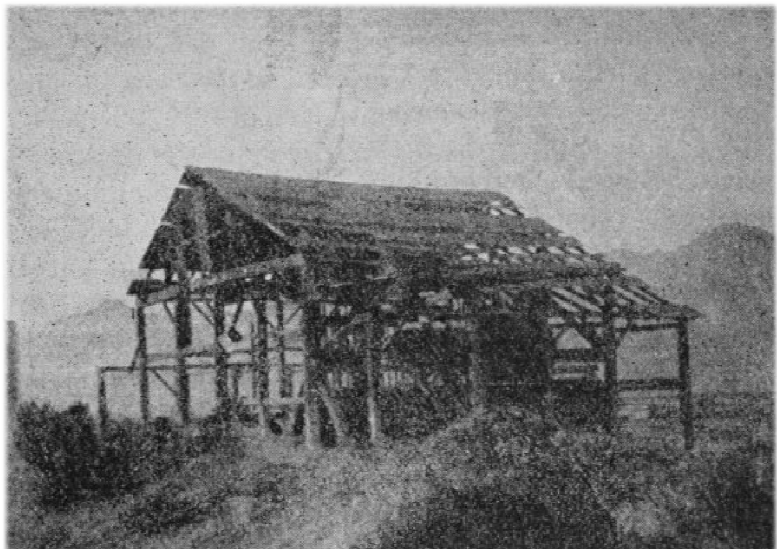
<http://golemtapes.blogspot.de/2011/11/g05.html>

Common sense might suspect that a recording in 'an abandoned industrial area' would result in some typical – nomen est omen – kind of recording. Sounds of forgotten equipment, howling of the wind through broken windows and lost corridors are aspects that come to mind first. 'Shiggajon' are the exact opposite. 'Streng' – English for strict – mocks the environment in which it had been recorded, but in two different kind of ways, which will be discussed separately:

1:

First, and this would be true for both tracks, 'Shiggajon' play instrumental music. Second, both of them are untitled; at least judging from the CD inlay and also the homepage of the label gives no indication whatsoever.

Anyway, the opener is a ritualistic, hypnotic, noisy, multi layered and instrumented composition whose sound and concept seem to form as large a contrast, to the place where it had been recorded, as possible. Even though the moaning of the violins opens the track and lead it for quite a while, the more it progresses, the more it diminishes in impact. What takes over is the minimalist rhythmic pondering of a tambourine. Would you play it to people sitting around fire, it can be doubted that they could resist the temptation to start some kind of dance. The percussion element gives the impression of attempting to drive out the ghosts of the forgotten place and bring some life back into it.



2:

Even though a certain similarity in the build-up of the composition and also a slight escalation in terms of the rhythms can be found, the music lacks the intense rhythms of the preceding composition. Here, rather a swaying of a body can be imagined, a trance-like state through the steadiness and the hypnotic atmosphere. The multi layered approach has more of an impact here and give the impression of overtones, even though the violins do not play steady tones but oscillate in some respect. Metal jingles add nuances of various rhythm patterns later, but similar to the strings they are more in a flow and do progress in a predictable kind of way.

'Strenghe' could be interpreted in such a way as the music follows a rather minimalist, controlled and strict kind of paradigm. Each of the two composition present a certain kind of idea, which is followed through until the end. The escalation in the levels of rhythms in the opener and the oscillating play of the violins in the second; only the zils add some contrasting nuances to it.

Note:

The physical releases are sold out, but the label has made it available as a free download.

Rotorvator

(Italy; Experimental, Black Metal, Noise)

<http://rotorvatorblack.blogspot.de/>, <http://rotorvator.bandcamp.com/>

Rotorvator / Cosmesi – NEROep (live 2010)

4 Tracks (MP3 – Self-released) -_- - (17:27)

I have meant to write on this release for quite a while now, but never ever reached a definite opinion on it. Well, this would not be the whole story. Those familiar with the trailer for this album – see the links below – will remember that aside from the band 'Rotorvator', a theatrical group called 'Cosmesi' – see also my interview in edition No. 13 – collaborated with them on stage and added through the use of dance a different kind of facet to the performance. When you think of it, such border crossing works should actually appear on a larger scale; for too many reasons to elaborate them here. I always hoped to see a definite video recording of the performance, but such was actually never intended to be spread or done.

Anyway, being a live recording, the four compositions offer an interesting insight into the general concept of the Italian band. The music is dense, dominated by heavy electronic beats/drums and the screams of the vocalist, while the guitars play more of a supportive role. Noise is a vital element in the music of 'Rotorvator' and this facet is never allowed to vanish entirely; in one way or another it manages to persist and reminds the listener of the experimental nature of the art.

Compared with black metal the basic elements appear distorted and maybe even in a somewhat mocked kind of way. The structure of the compositions is quite free and in some levels even improvised, which adds an interesting dynamic to it all. Especially how one track moves over to the next and how it attempts to take over the dynamics of the previous ones makes this ep quite a trip. Except for the calm last composition, the rest is nothing but a violent bombardment of noises, riffs and beats. In some respect it is astounding that there are no samples of any kind used, whose part would have intensified the performance even more.

Short, sick, nasty ... certainly more impressive than a lot of things that happen in the true black metal scene these days.

Note:

Some visual impressions can be found here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ee7OpoUw5cg>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MdDqvJmXUSM>

Rotorvator – Heavens

3 Tracks (CD – Self-released) - _ _ - (15:17)

The cover artwork says it all: a disrupted, chaotic being. Vague contours of a skull can be recognized, but similar to the conceptual breadth of Rotorvator, the total sum of its parts exceeds what can be described as 'healthy' or even normal. In some respect it would be fair to state that they do not seem to add up. Elements or fragments might be perceived as left over, falling out of the boundaries and therefore refuse to fit with the ordinary perception of music.

Contrary to the previous releases of the Italians, this latest one presents the idea in a surprisingly broad and daring kind of way. Here, the variety of sounds, noises and especially of stylistic approaches exceeds what the band offered on their earlier outputs. 'Shelter in the Pit', with its distinct percussion (?) element/motive takes the listener into previously unexplored waters for instance.

These new facets add a sense of maturity to the performance, which is also reflected through the level of song-writing as well as the use of repetition, as a means to add structure to the arrangements. Despite the general experimental nature of Rotorvator, the level of chaos has been reduced to some extent and it is easier to follow the musicians on their path now.

Furthermore, the level or the impact of the guitars is less now. Electronic beats and sounds have taken over, while the strings are not allowed to appear in each of the compositions any more. Equally, the aspect of noise has been reduced a bit, with the obvious result that everything sounds not as harsh as on the previous outputs.

Three compositions, three different facets, three varying approaches: Experimental black metal – experimental noise / black metal – industrial / black metal. Rotorvator is circling around a certain concept or idea and the musicians attempt to reinterpret their approach with each composition anew. Each album is a new shard of the complex mindset of the Italians. This latest one, even though still considerably extreme, is actually quite calm and inoffensive.

Those who prefer to wander on the outer boundaries of the black metal scene and are interested in an extreme interpretation of the aforementioned genre, might want to give this band a try. Their bandcamp entry provides an insight into all of their releases; including this one.

Note:

Available on CDr only at Rotorvator gigs.



Poetry



Stumbleine – All for your smile

<http://stumbleine.bandcamp.com/album/all-for-your-smile>

All for me and none for you?
Can the sweetness be so true?
Do ya really want for me the best?
Or is it just a faux ill test?

Oh how the words linger blurred
Impossible to grasp, oh, just one

On and on the phrases run
Sailing on the sounds' high crest

How it sways and leaves a fog
Yet never breaks a single rock.
Not chaotic but messy in a limit
Does it feel not slightly timid?

A tour de force, an imposition at least
while to the ear it might be a feast
Can take you to the ecstasy,
but may it help to break you free?

The Lunar and the Polaroid do fade
Leaving barely ev' a kind of shape
And if you Bloom with Alice in a Band
You'd still Waste the Summer with a rant
Like a Light Sleeper

Oh gosh this is some kind of mess
Do not sue me for trespass
My hands did write these lines, oh yes
This is what I truly have to confess
The smile is sadly part of a schism
Like the light broken in a prism
Part of 'n insanely morbid spasm
My inner body's unseen chasm

With a smile on her lips, and a tear in her eye. (*)
Only one thing is sadly left to say:
.....Goodbye.

(*) Walter Scott, Marmion (1808), Canto V, Stanza 12.
https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Walter_Scott

Amy Seeley – Eight Belles
<http://amyseeley.bandcamp.com/>

An instrument we, oh, love to hear
but on the other hand we cannot bear
'cos it really really drags you down
like the burden of a king's own crown

This reference does not make much sense
And maybe I can make amends
by offering to you a twirling dance

Oh the music, well it's just not right
maybe more ample for a candlelight
How Hard I try I do fail again
A Walk in the Park in Arizona, then.

I've Got Ideas so much is true
On realizing them I have no clue
I hope it is not something to rue

Let me instead discuss the Belles
The core aspect of all the tells
Eight of them can here be found
And each comes with a lovely sound.

Led by a softly soothing voice
Grasping you, leav'n no choice
Though not all mov' to rejoice

Calm instruments do set the pace
Piano, guitars, drums, yes, this is it
Never ever attempt to race
Combined in a conserv'tive fit

Eight times eight on a board of chess
Eight hours of work, eight hours of play,
eight hours of sleep - eight hours a day! (*)
Eight paragraphs in a poem ... let me end it now.

(*) https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Bill_Haywood

孜孜不倦 (ZiZi) – 斷 Duan

<http://zizi.bandcamp.com/track/duan>

Do you understand this tongue?
To many it just sounds so wrong.
And 漢字 don't get me started there.
It's more than my 头 can bear.

A calm melody, drums and a guitar,
with a 声部 from a place afar
Add a keyboard to this as well
But this is just the outer 包层

Gentleness, in its fullest meaning
A 声调 that might set you 做梦
A cliché like in a 中文 restaurant
Yes, this simply cannot be wrong

Where are these 漢字 coming from?
Have they been here all along?
越来越多 do here appear
Is this something 我 have to 害怕?

I 写字 these lines in 'n 英语 tongue
While another sneaks in one by one.
Is it the 乐 that has to car' the 咎?
Or am 我 finally turning quite 发狂?

Oh, how the 声调 keeps singing on
Luring me t'wards the 旭
越来越多我 lose control
As the 中文 takes over my poor 人

我 hardly 了 what 我 write
These 词语 morph under 我的 own 面前
日新月异 to something, oh, so 不明
Leaving 我 with 无 but a frown

停!
这结束!
拜托

救命啊!

救命啊!

救命啊!

救命啊!

Random stuff

Beijing Post Rock

<http://1724.bandcamp.com/album/beijing-post-rock>

Helps you to get an impression over the post-rock scene in Beijing. A small bargain is required to download it from bandcamp, but other (free) download links can be found on this site as well.

Lovecraft e-zine

<http://lovecraftzine.com/>

Those interested in the Lovecraft universe will find modern adaptation of his mythology on this page.

Carsie Blanton: Idiot Heart

[http://freemusicarchive.org/curator/FrostClick/blog/Carsie Blanton Idiot Heart](http://freemusicarchive.org/curator/FrostClick/blog/Carsie_Blanton_Idiot_Heart)

Some wonderful music you should listen to.

Music from Mali:

[http://freemusicarchive.org/member/FMAmp3/blog/MP3 of the Day Khaira Arby Dja Cheickna Live KEXP](http://freemusicarchive.org/member/FMAmp3/blog/MP3_of_the_Day_Khaira_Arby_Dja_Cheickna_Live_KEXP)

History changes faster than I am able to release the magazine. The recent changes in Mali are deeply troubling. I had spotted this band at the FMA before the events took place ...

This is traditional music from this African country and you might also want to check the Youtube videos:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vQVPW7c_J1Y&feature=relmfu

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D1-dlyl-1LM&feature=relmfu>

Jozik Records

<http://www.jozikrecords.net/>

They have a new homepage... and new releases.

Ursonate Fanzine

<http://noconventions.mobi/noish/ursonatefanzine/?p=33>

In case you speak Spanish and like experimental music, this latest edition of this magazine might be of interest to you.

Mattoid

<http://mattoid.funguscerebri.com/>

A noise label with some new stuff out ...

Artilleria Pesada

<http://a-pesada.blogspot.de/>

Has a newsletter now ... so in case you want to keep in touch with them, it has become easier now. The focus of music is on Spanish artists and in terms of the style by no means narrow.

Golem Tapes

<http://golemtapes.blogspot.com/>

They do not only have a new batch out, but the sold-out releases have been made available for free download.

Sources of the pictures:

<http://archive.org/details/storyofmusic00crowuoft>
<http://archive.org/details/danceofdeath00inholb>
<http://archive.org/details/illustratedsketc00spea>
<http://archive.org/details/modernillustrati00penn>
<http://archive.org/details/brochureseriesof06bostuoft>
<http://archive.org/details/brochureseriesov07bostuoft>
<http://archive.org/details/brochureseriesof03bostuoft>
<http://archive.org/details/brochureseriesof08bostuoft>
<http://archive.org/details/ofdecorativeill00cranuoft>
<http://archive.org/details/turnerssketchesd00finbuoft>
<http://archive.org/details/caricaturewithum01newy>
<http://archive.org/details/caricaturewithum03newy>
<http://archive.org/details/artofillustratio00blacrich>

Outlook

More interviews, more reviews ...

some poem things ...

and some other stuff ...

